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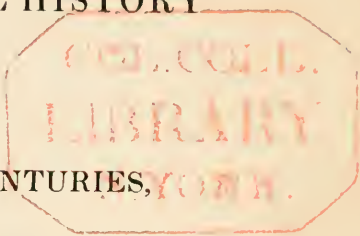
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LECTURES
UPON THE
ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY
OF THE
FIRST THREE CENTURIES,



FROM THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS CHRIST,
TO THE YEAR 313.

BY

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

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PREFACE.

IT will perhaps be remarked, that the following *Lectures upon the ecclesiastical history of the first century* might have been entitled with equal propriety, *Lectures upon the Acts of the Apostles*. The remark is not inapplicable to the first nine Lectures : and instead of feeling a wish to remove such an objection, I would state at the commencement of this preface, that one of my objects in delivering these Lectures was to furnish a commentary upon the Acts of the Apostles, which might be useful to persons who were studying that work, as well as to the general reader of ecclesiastical history.

If we look through the first century of the Christian era, we shall find among other divisions of it, which are more or less artificial, that we may divide it into the periods before and after the death of St. Peter and St. Paul. If these apostles suffered martyrdom at the end of the reign of Nero, we may say in round numbers, that this division consists of two periods, the first of seventy, the latter of thirty years. Concerning the greater part of the first period, we have the most authentic materials in the writings of the New Testament : concerning the latter period, we know little, and are left principally to conjecture and tradition. This being the case, a minute history of events in the first century will appear tedious and

unnecessary to many persons, so long as they are attending to facts, which they have already collected from the New Testament: and accordingly many writers pass over this part of the history very rapidly, assuming that their readers are already familiar with it. There is perhaps no place, in which I might have more justly made this assumption, than where I was addressing an academical audience, and where many of my hearers were professionally studying the Scriptures. I have, however, preferred the plan of dwelling with equal minuteness upon every portion of the first century, where materials presented themselves: and one object, as I observed above, was to furnish an illustration of the Acts of the Apostles.

I am not aware of any ecclesiastical historian, who has followed the same plan. Most writers appear to me to have made this part of their history too short and superficial. My own work will perhaps be considered too minute and circumstantial: but having stated the twofold plan, which I had in view, I have to hope that criticism will be confined to the execution only.

The part which will probably give rise to most discussion, is that which concerns the chronology: and having ventured to differ from many modern writers, I may state in justice to myself, that the scheme was not adopted hastily, but that continued reflection persuades me more and more of its approximation to truth. It may be added, that the

Fathers and early ecclesiastical writers are nearly unanimous in supporting it. In writing a connected history, it was absolutely necessary, that some dates should be assigned: and the inconvenience of introducing critical discussions upon points of chronology is very apparent. I have therefore assumed the calculations to be true, which I explained in a small tract published in 1830, entitled, *An attempt to ascertain the chronology of the Acts of the Apostles, and of St. Paul's Epistles*: and the following short statement will enable any person to make the same calculations for himself.

I have taken the death of Herod Agrippa, mentioned in Acts xii. as a fixed and ascertained date. Good reasons have been advanced for fixing it in 43: but so large a majority of critics has placed it in 44, that I have adopted that opinion. The first apostolic journey of St. Paul commenced about this period: (compare Acts xi. 30. xii. 25. xiii. 2:) and in following the detailed narrative of St. Luke, I cannot but be astonished, that any person should suppose this journey to have occupied more than a few months, or at most more than one year. This leads us to place the Council at Jerusalem (Acts xv.) in the year 46: and each successive perusal of the Epistle to the Galatians persuades me more and more, that the visit of St. Paul to Jerusalem, mentioned in Gal. ii. 1, is that when he went with Barnabas to attend the Council in 46. This visit was fourteen years after some former event in his life;

and I cannot but conclude, that he was speaking of fourteen years from the visit to Jerusalem, mentioned in Gal. i. 18: and this is expressly said to have been three years after his conversion. We might thus seem to be carried back seventeen years from the year 46, and so to place the conversion of St. Paul in the year 29: but since this appears too early a date for the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, (which must have preceded the conversion of St. Paul,) there must be some error in the calculation: and this may easily be rectified, by supposing one or both of the periods of three and fourteen years to be taken inclusively; or in other words, by supposing St. Paul to have meant, *in the third year I went up to Jerusalem*, (Gal. i. 18.) and *in the fourteenth year after I went up again to Jerusalem*. (ii. 1.) We might thus go back only fifteen years from the year 46, and the conversion of St. Paul would be placed in 31. This is the date which I have assumed for that event: and I may again quote the authority of the early writers, as supporting me in placing the conversion of St. Paul within a few months after the ascension of Jesus Christ. For the arguments in support of this opinion, I would refer to the tract mentioned above.

The cardinal points in this scheme of chronology are the conversion of St. Paul, the council at Jerusalem, and the first arrival of St. Paul in Rome. The latter date must be fixed by calculating the time which is necessary for the events detailed by St.

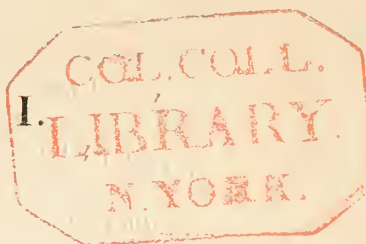
Luke : and whoever has considered the latter part of St. Paul's life, will feel the convenience of supposing him to arrive at Rome as early as 56 : by which means we have a period of six or eight years subsequent to his release, in which he may have preached the gospel in different countries.

This is the outline of the plan, which was followed by myself : and I have more confidence in asking the reader to make a similar calculation, because upon two occasions, when I was lecturing upon the Acts of the Apostles, nearly all the persons, who attempted to arrange these dates, came separately and independently to the same conclusions. I may be excused for feeling strengthened in my own previous opinion by this unbiassed and involuntary agreement.

The reason, which I have given for not introducing chronological discussions, has also led me in other cases to state the conclusions, without adding the process by which they were obtained. Historical disquisitions are curious and valuable, but they impede the course of regular history : and few persons can have read the works of Mosheim, without lamenting the length of his notes, and consequently the frequent interruption of the narrative. I have thought it better to refer the reader to the authors, who have discussed these points : and though it has not been my wish to multiply references, I have endeavoured to supply the reader with the means of obtaining the best information. I ought

perhaps to apologize for having so often referred to my Bampton Lectures: but many of the events, which are noticed in the present work, have been discussed at considerable length in the notes to the Bampton Lectures: and having seen no reason to alter my opinions, I could hardly avoid pointing out the places, where the grounds of my reasoning may be seen.

LECTURE I.



WHEN the Son of God had finished the work for which he came into the world, and ascended to his former glory, the Roman empire was swayed by a man, whose character is marked by as much unmixed depravity, as we meet with in the annals of any civilized nation. It would be hopeless, and perhaps it is unnecessary, in a dissertation of this kind, to attempt to settle accurately the year of our Lord's crucifixion. A probable approximation to the truth is sufficient for our present purpose: and speaking generally I should say, that those chronologists appear to have most reason on their side, who place the crucifixion and ascension of Jesus Christ in the year 783 or 784 from the building of Rome, which correspond with the years 30 and 31 of the Christian era^a. If we adopt the latter date, our Lord was crucified when Tiberius had been in sole possession of the empire for nearly seventeen years. It was a little before this period, that the death of his mother Julia Augusta^b had freed him from a partial restraint, and he had plunged more deeply into that refined and degrading sensuality, which, together with cold-blooded and calculating cruelty, seem at this time to have absorbed a mind,

^a See Seneschallus, *Triad. Evangel.* Quæst. I. c. 1--12. Natalis Alexander, *Diss.* II. Quæst. I. L. Capellus, *Hist.*

Apost. p. 46. Fabricius, *Bibliog. Antiq.* c. vii. sect. 10. p. 187.

^b Tacit. *Annal.* V. 1.

not unsuited by nature for worthier and higher objects. It was about this time also, that his minister and favourite Sejanus met the reward of his crimes, and was deprived at once of his influence and his life^c. This was perhaps another restraint withdrawn from the licentious passions of Tiberius; and like other persons, who have heaped favours upon their minions, after profiting by their vices, he was perhaps not sorry to get rid of a man, who, after being the means of depressing others, had become himself an object of jealousy.

Tiberius had at this time little to interest or employ him in political affairs. His reign, though morally disgraceful, was glorious for the Roman arms; and the empire, which was transmitted to him by Augustus almost in a state of peace, was enlarged in more than one direction by accessions of territory. At the time of which I am speaking, the Roman dominion was bounded only by the ocean on the side of Spain and Britain. A chain of formidable garrisons held the Gauls in subjection: and Germanicus had not only pushed his conquests to the mouth of the Rhine amidst the fens and morasses of modern Holland; but he had inflicted signal vengeance on Arminius, and exhibited the triumphs of Rome on the banks of the Elbe. A revolt, which was more than once excited in Africa by Tacfarinas, was as often and speedily suppressed; and in the east, where the limits of the empire were more undefined, the dissensions between Parthia and Armenia gave to their ambitious neighbours, as is usual in such impolitic quarrels, a ground of interference, and thence an acknowledged superiority. The whole

^c Dio Cass. LVIII. 11. p. 885.

of Asia Minor might be said to be divided into pro-consular governments. Cappadocia was the last country which maintained its independence; and when the king was summoned to Rome, and there ended his days, his kingdom was reduced to a province in the fourth year of the reign of Tiberius. The commander, whose station was most critical, and whose services were most actively engaged, was the person who represented the Roman government in Syria. Beside being in constant communication with the military governor of Egypt, he had a delicate and unceasing occupation nearer home, in watching the jealousies between Parthia and Armenia, and in securing the dominion which Rome really exercised over both. The storm had not yet begun to gather fully in Judæa; and the disturbances, which occasionally arose on account of the paying of the tribute, were sufficiently checked by the ordinary Roman forces quartered in the country. These were under the command of the president of Syria, who fixed his residence at Antioch; and of the procurator of Judæa, whose inferior office required him particularly to watch the movements of that country, and who, being generally stationed at Cæsarea, went up to Jerusalem on few occasions, except at the public festivals.

The circumstances of the Jewish people at this period, and their political situation, are so intimately connected with the first rise of Christianity, that a little more detail may be necessary upon this point.

I need not go back to the period of their return from captivity, nor to the serious evils which they suffered from being situated between the rival king-

doms of Syria and Egypt. The brilliant successes of the Maccabees had also no immediate connexion with the present subject; though perhaps it was the increase of territory, and the rising importance which the Jewish nation had assumed under their command, that first led the Romans to view them with a jealous eye. Hyrcanus, who beside conquering the Idumeans in the immediate neighbourhood of Jerusalem, made himself master of all Samaria and Galilee, had the prudence to enter into a treaty of close alliance with Rome^d. This was about 129 years before the birth of Christ: and the kingdoms of Syria and Egypt were still so far independent, though both were tottering to their base, that an extension or contraction of the Jewish territory did not necessarily call for Roman interference. The dissensions of the grandsons of Hyrcanus led to this fatal consequence; and in the year 63 before Christ, Jerusalem was besieged and taken by Pompey, who had listened as arbiter to both parties, but probably intended from the first to settle the dispute by his own soldiers^e. Pompey, as might be expected, favoured that one of the rival brothers who was likely to be the most submissive tool in his own hands: and leaving the feeble Hyrcanus as high priest and nominal head of the Jewish nation, he carried off the more warlike and enterprising Aristobulus as his prisoner. He took care also to limit the dominions of Hyrcanus to Judæa, and then for the first time he imposed a tribute upon the Jews, which was to be paid to the Roman people. The profanation of the temple by Pompey was never forgiven by the Jews. In the civil war which ensued, they took

^d Joseph. *Antiq.* XIII. 9.

^e *Ib.* XIV. 4.

part with Cæsar, and were able to render him some assistance in his Egyptian campaigns^f. The opportunity, however, which this contest might have given them of once more regaining their independence, was lost by their own internal dissensions. Aristobulus, and his son Alexander, made many attempts to reinstate themselves in power; and Jerusalem was for some years a constant scene of bloodshed. Antipater the Idumean, who might have used his influence with Cæsar in benefiting his country, was looking merely to his own interest; and being invested by the conqueror with the government of Judæa, in the larger sense of that term, he appointed his son Herod to superintend the affairs of Galilee^g. Herod was from the first bold, crafty, ambitious, and regardless of the measures which he pursued: hence, as might be expected in such times of anarchy, he was often successful, but sometimes on the brink of ruin; and never losing sight of the expediency of paying court to Rome, he gained the summit of his ambition, when his affairs seemed almost desperate. Antigonus, the son of Aristobulus, by aid of the Parthians entered Jerusalem, and held it with a numerous army. Herod, who was wholly unable to meet him in the field, took the decisive step of going to Rome; and there, unexpectedly, as it appears, even to himself, he received the crown of Judæa from Mark Antony and Augustus. Returning with astonishing celerity, and almost before the news of his elevation could be known, he marched an army to Jerusalem, and in conjunction with the Roman forces commanded by Sosius, he

^f Joseph. *Antiq.* XIV. 8.

^g Ibid. XIV. 9.

took their city after a long and obstinate struggle^b. This may be looked upon as the real beginning of Herod's reign, about thirty-seven years before the Christian era: and though the precise date of Herod's death is attended with difficulty, we know that our Saviour's birth did not long precede it.

During this period of thirty-seven years, the chains which bound Judæa to Rome were more firmly riveted, although there was always a strong and zealous party opposed to such a disgraceful dependence. Herod was an usurper, and had therefore a real interest in removing every remnant of the Asmonean family. This is a clue to most of the atrocious cruelties which disgraced his reign: and he had sagacity enough to see, that nothing but a close alliance with Rome could secure his power. In pursuance of this principle, notwithstanding his former connexion with Antony, he contrived to propitiate Octavius after the battle of Actium; and the conqueror bestowed on him part of the territory, which Cleopatra had formerly wrested from Judæaⁱ. This put him in possession of Samaria, and several maritime towns: and later in his reign he gained also the country called Trachonitis, to the east of the lake of Gennesaret^k. It would be absurd to deny to Herod the possession of talent and deep political foresight. To keep on good terms with Rome was perhaps not difficult: but it is certain, that there was a large party of the Jewish people, with whom he was not unpopular. This was perhaps owing to his unbounded magnificence, which dazzled the eyes of his subjects; added to which, his reign

^b Joseph. *Antiq.* XIV. 16. ⁱ Ib. XV. 7, 3. ^k Ibid. XV. 10, 1.

was really one of peace and prosperity to the nation at large. His great work of rebuilding the temple, which he commenced about seventeen years before Christ¹, must have been particularly gratifying to the national feeling; and he made use of his influence at Rome to obtain for the Jews of Asia Minor a ratification of all their privileges. Still there was not a particle of real patriotism in the breast of Herod. To promote and secure his own authority was the first and last of all his cares. It was this which embroiled his hands so deeply in the blood of his own family, and which urged him to the policy of gradually accustoming his subjects to Grecian and Roman manners. This could only be done with great caution, and to a small extent in Jerusalem itself: nor did his attempts always pass without open opposition. But in other towns of his dominions, and particularly in Cæsarea, (which he built on the sea-coast where Straton's tower before stood,) he disregarded the customs and religious feelings of his subjects, and endeavoured to reconcile them to heathen manners. There was a party, as I have already said, which always watched these innovations with a jealous eye: and though his alliance with Rome made it impossible to throw off the yoke, there were many who sternly refused to make any profession of dependence upon a foreign power. The Pharisees and Essenes were most resolute in this opposition: and we have other evidence, beside that of the New Testament, that a national expectation was generally entertained of some great Deliverer, who was shortly to appear, and restore

¹ Joseph. *Antiq.* XV. 11.

them to their former freedom^m. Such an expectation was likely to agitate Herod, as well as the Roman government; and the tragedy, which was acted at Bethlehem not long before Herod's death, though not noticed by Josephus, or any other historian, is in accordance with all that we read of his suspicious and sanguinary temper. The flight of Joseph and his wife's infant son into Egypt is another proof that Herod's fears were by no means slight, and that he took active measures to remove the possibility of a rival. The slaughter of the innocents, or the execution of his own son, was the last public act of Herod's life: and since his policy had not led him to court personal attachment, the Jews could of themselves have had no desire to place any of his family upon the throne. Herod, however, in the course of his long reign had cut off almost every branch of the Asmonean family. The hopes, which might have been kindled by a leader sprung from that heroic line, were destroyed; and feelings of patriotism, or deep and sullen discontent, were not sufficient to shake the firm foundation on which the power of Rome was built.

The sons of Herod, whose feelings were much more foreign than Jewish, did not hesitate as to the quarter to which they were to look for possession of their father's territories. Regardless of the anarchy in which they left Jerusalem and Judæa, they hastened to Rome, and pleaded against each other, at the foot of Cæsar's throne, for the right of succeeding to a father, whom they had hated, and of oppressing a people whose interests they ought to

^m See Tacit. *Hist.* V. 13. Sueton. *Vespas.* 4. Joseph. *de Bel. Jud.* VII. 12. Basnage, *Hist. des Juifs*, tom. V. c. 10. p. 193.

have protected. The feeling of the Jews towards Herod's family, and their devoted love of liberty, were shewn by their sending at the same time a deputation to Augustus, and petitioning to be restored to their independenceⁿ. The account of this embassy also informs us of the great numbers of Jews who were then resident at Rome. We are told that 8000 were present at the audience which the emperor gave to the deputies from Judæa. It was not however probable that he would listen to their request. The fact of there being so many of these foreigners within his own capital may perhaps have impressed upon him still more the expediency of keeping the people in subjection; and we may trace a well known principle in the science of extensive despotism, in his dividing the dominions of Herod among three persons, who would be checks upon each other, and all of them dependent upon Rome. The territory, which was now at the disposal of Augustus, comprised Judæa in the largest sense of that term; i. e. from Idumæa on the south, to Galilee on the north, as well as a tract of nearly equal extent on the east of the Jordan. Archelaus received what was perhaps considered the most distinguished portion, containing Idumæa, Judæa, and Samaria; but it might be doubted, whether Antipas had not really a more enviable allotment in the quieter districts of Galilee and Peræa. The northern part of the trans-Jordanic territories was allotted to Philip. Archelaus had left Jerusalem in a state of great confusion; and the love of liberty, as well as the rapacity of the Roman officers, had excited the

ⁿ Joseph. *Antiq.* XVII. 11. *de Bel. Jud.* II. 6, 1.

Jews to such a degree, that Varus, the president of Syria, was scarcely able to quell them with a large military force. The reign of Archelaus was one of continued riot and unpopularity; and the accusations against him compelling him to go to Rome in the tenth year from his appointment, he was banished to Vienne in Gaul^o. This was about the year 8 or 9 of the Christian era: and from the banishment of Archelaus the Jews did not retain even the semblance of independence. Judæa, with the adjoining districts of Idumæa and Samaria, was placed under the president of Syria, and under the immediate superintendence of a governor called Procurator, who was nominated by the emperor. There is reason to think that this change, though it made the subjection of the Jews complete, was the cause of throwing more power than before into the hands of the priests and the sanhedrim. The Roman procurator collected the tribute: he continued the system, which had been begun first by Herod, of appointing and deposing the high priest at his will: and he overawed the multitude, particularly at the great festivals, by a strong military force: but a Roman officer had no taste for discussing or deciding points of Jewish law; and the civil and criminal jurisprudence seems to have been left very much to Jewish tribunals. It may be doubted whether those persons are right who assert that the Jews lost at this time the power of life and death. "Take him, and judge him according to your law^p," was the answer of Pilate himself to the Jewish authorities, when they called upon him to execute Jesus:

^o Joseph. *Antiq.* XVII. 13.

^p John xviii. 31.

and they may have done this, because it was contrary to their religion to execute criminals at the passover, and because they wished to cast upon Jesus the odium of political disaffection^q. However this may be, there can be no doubt that the uncertain tenure upon which the high priests held their office, led them into the usual consequences of intrigue, injustice, and rapacity: the rivalry between Pharisees and Sadducees distracted the counsels of the sanhedrim; and it is not strange, that the people were led by the example of their rulers into the commission of similar excesses.

The immediate annexation of Judæa to the Roman empire was the time chosen by Augustus for collecting the tax, for which the inhabitants had been assessed nine or ten years before, at the time of our Saviour's birth. Quirinius, who had the disagreeable office of receiving it, was met with violent opposition. For some years the Jews in different parts of the country had followed one leader after another, who excited them against the Romans, and generally led them to destruction. A more formidable insurrection was now raised by Judas in Galilee^r; and though, like former leaders, he could make no stand against the Romans in the field, the party of Judas continued active for a long time: and the persons who were called *Zealots*, from their zeal for the national religion and independence, perhaps began first to be organized at this period.

Augustus appointed three procurators during the remaining six years of his reign^s; the disturbed

^q See Deylingius, *Observ. Sacr.* part. II. p. 313. Basnage, *Hist. des Juifs*, tom. III. l. 5. c.

2. Biscoe, c. 6.

^r Joseph. *Antiq.* XVIII. 1.

^s Coponius, A. D. 8. M. Am-

state of the country perhaps making it impossible for any of these officers to satisfy his master. During the twenty-three years which Tiberius reigned, there were only two procurators^t; which might seem to shew that a better method had now been learnt of keeping the Jews in subjection; or, as Tiberius himself professed, he considered that a governor, who continued long in his province, was not likely to be so rapacious, as those who knew that they were soon to be superseded. Tacitus despatches the history of Judæa during the reign of Tiberius in three words, “*sub Tiberio quies*”^u;” and the sententious Roman would have thought himself justified in using the term *quiet*, if no serious or successful resistance was made at that period to the Roman arms. A Jewish historian would probably have written very differently; or if the state of things might be described at all as *quiet*, it was like the quiet of the elements before a storm; when he who can discern the signs of the times, perceives that the evil is only suspended, and waiting for a signal to burst forth. The term *quiet* was still less applicable to the Jews, who came more immediately under the notice of Tiberius; for in the year 19 some thousands of them were sent from Rome, their peculiar religion being confounded with the superstitions of Egypt: and again, about the year 23, by the influence of Sejanus, the emperor banished them from Rome, or, as some think, from Italy^x. This decree was not reversed till after the fall of Sejanus,

bivius, A. D. 10. A. Rufus, A. D. 13.

^t Valerius Gratus, A. D. 15. Pontius Pilatus, A. D. 26.

^u Hist. V. 9.

^x See Joseph. *Antiq.* XVIII. 3. Philo Jud. *Leg. ad Caimm*, p. 569. *adv. Flaccum*, p. 517. Tacit. *Annal.* II. 85. Sueton. *Tib.* 36.

which happened in the year 31; so that many Roman Jews were likely to be in Judæa during our Saviour's ministry; and the Romans, who are spoken of as resident in Jerusalem when the Holy Ghost fell on the Apostles^y, may have been some of those Jews and proselytes to Judaism, who had been forced to leave Rome.

The two procurators sent to Judæa by Tiberius were Valerius Gratus and Pontius Pilate; the latter of whom was appointed in the year 26. The ordinary residence of these officers being at Cæsarea, brought them less frequently and personally in contact with the Jewish authorities. Pilate however found a strong proof of the national feeling which I have described, when he introduced some troops into Jerusalem by night, and in the morning the Roman standards exhibited to the Jews the eagle, and the image of the emperor. This public display of an image offended their religious, still more than their political, feelings; and though Pilate was at first disposed to treat their remonstrance with contempt, he was obliged at last to yield, and the obnoxious standards were withdrawn^z.

Such was the state of things in Judæa when John the Baptist began to preach in the fifteenth year of Tiberius, perhaps about the year 28 of our era; and our Saviour's ministry may be supposed to have begun in the following year 29. The Jews, as we have seen, were impatient of subjection, and had often broken out into revolt; but they had now been accustomed to the yoke for nearly twenty years; and I should suspect, that beside the Zealots, whose

^y Acts ii. 10.

^z Joseph. *Antiq.* XVIII. 3. *de Bel. Jud.* II. 9, 2.

principles were openly avowed, the opposition to Rome was greater, or at least more sincere, among the lower orders of people, than with the priests and rulers. The latter, as I have observed, had much real power left in their hands by the Romans, and this may have been a measure of policy, to separate the interests of the higher and lower orders: but the people, who felt and cared little about the exercise of power, knew that they paid a tribute to foreigners; and, as is often the case, though as often a mistaken expectation, they coupled the idea of political independence with that of a freedom from taxation. In one sense therefore the people of Judæa were ready to receive any person who professed to be their deliverer; and yet when the real Deliverer appeared amongst them, they rejected and crucified him. The reason of this apparent inconsistency is not difficult to find. In the first place, if we contrast the conduct of Jesus with that of Theudas, Judas of Galilee, or any other of the popular leaders, we see at once the striking contrast, that these men excited the people not to pay tribute, and rested their popularity upon this resistance; whereas the principle of Jesus was, *Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's*. Jesus therefore was not the deliverer who was looked for by the people: if his opinion was considered at all concerning the question of Roman interference, it was rather in favour of it than against it; and if he gained followers, it must have been upon some other principle than that which we have hitherto been tracing. Again, if we look to the Gospel history, we find that the lower orders *were* much more disposed than their rulers to acknowledge Jesus. Upon more than one

occasion he was forced to elude their intentions to make him a king: the priests were well aware that this was the popular feeling; and never perhaps was the inconstancy of such a feeling more strikingly displayed, than when the same multitudes shouted at the crucifixion of Jesus, who but a few days before had hailed him with Hosannas, and followed him in triumph into Jerusalem.

These considerations may assist us in understanding how John the Baptist was the forerunner of Jesus. So long as the public feeling continued as it was, it was impossible that the gospel could be generally received. The wickedness of the nation had become enormous; and the only deliverance which they sought was from their Roman masters. To effect this was, as they thought, to restore again the kingdom of God; but as for any moral change, which should make them fit to receive God's favours, they did not entertain a notion of it. John therefore began by trying to convince his hearers, that repentance and amendment were necessary. His doctrine, as that of our Saviour, was, that *the kingdom of heaven was within them*; i. e. it might be within them, and depended upon the purity of their own hearts. We read, that the preaching of John had an astonishing effect. We need not suppose that all who were baptized by him abandoned the idea of an earthly deliverer; but they at least admitted the principle, that in order to belong to the kingdom of God, they must repent, and forsake their sins. The preaching of John seems to have left two leading impressions upon the minds of his disciples; one, that the expected deliverer was at hand; and the other, that this deliverer would not profit

them, unless they brought forth fruits meet for repentance. John therefore was strictly the forerunner of Christ. He was *to make ready a people prepared for the Lord*. His doctrine was in every sense the same as that of Jesus Christ; only *he was not himself that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light*. His preaching appears to have produced an effect beyond the limits of Judæa; and at a period twenty years later we read of some Jews at Ephesus, who had been baptized unto John's baptism^a. I should understand by this, that they belonged to that party which acknowledged the necessity of holiness and repentance, and which looked anxiously for the coming of the promised Redeemer. This expectation was in some sense entertained by all the Jews; but John's preaching gave rise to a great division of them into those who thought repentance necessary, and those who did not: and the former adopted as the outward token of their belief that bodily ablution, which long after the time of John himself continued to bear his name.

Our Saviour found this division already established when he began his ministry. There were many already disposed to hear his heavenly morality; and the doctrine of a judgment to come, which implied a chance of even true Israelites being rejected, made a deep and practical impression upon their hearts. This was a great step gained: but the doctrine of a future judgment, if founded upon mere human principles, can scarcely fail to lead to the notion, that good and evil deeds will balance each other: it will inflate some men with arrogant presumption; it will sink others into melancholy

^a Acts xix. 3.

despair. The preaching of John, if a mightier than he had not followed him, might only have been marked by this result: and Jesus Christ undertook, with the aid of twelve unlettered men, to subvert these conclusions of human reason, and to convince mankind that their own righteousness could never bring them to heaven. John appears to have gained his influence by the methods usually employed by popular teachers: but Jesus had greater and more mysterious truths to impart; and it was necessary that he should command attention by other and extraordinary means. The miracles of Jesus Christ were not mere displays of superhuman power, intended to dazzle and confound; nor were those, which had a beneficent and merciful effect, directed to that as their sole object: they were worked, that men might draw from them this conclusion, that *no man can do these miracles, except God be with him*^a; and that the followers of Jesus might appeal to him as *a man approved of God by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him*^b. We are not to look upon the ministry of Christ, during the short time that he was upon earth, as a full developement of the scheme which he came to accomplish. He was rather the doer and perfecter of that scheme, than the expounder of it. It may be doubted, whether his immediate forerunner, at the time of his death, fully understood the real nature of his office, and of the deliverance which was at hand. Jesus himself certainly did not declare it openly. He let fall occasionally obscure and mysterious sayings, which his disciples remembered afterwards,

^a John iii. 2.^b Acts ii. 22.

when their hearts were enlightened ; but nothing short of a miracle could have made them understand at once the spirituality and universality of the gospel scheme. The disciples required to be trained and disciplined, as well as the rest of the people ; and we shall see that several years elapsed, before they comprehended the whole of the doctrine which they were to preach. Jesus therefore and John the Baptist preached one and the same doctrine. The language of both of them was, that *the kingdom of heaven is at hand*. As preachers, they both prepared men to be admitted into this kingdom : the difference between them was, that Christ by his death opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers. The redemption of man was then accomplished ; but man had yet to learn this great truth : and he, who had prepared men to receive it, and had himself purchased their deliverance, provided means to spread the glad tidings throughout the world.

This view of our Saviour's earthly ministry may remove our surprise, that it continued so short a time. The great end of his coming was to die for man, and by his own resurrection to enable us all to rise again. It was necessary that he should be tried, as men are tried, but that he should be without sin : and even a shorter life than his would have been sufficient for such a trial. If he had not preached at all, the object of his coming would have been equally accomplished ; though his disciples would perhaps have found greater difficulty in spreading the gospel. As it was, he prepared men to receive it, by teaching them to feel the necessity of repentance. He touched their hearts by the awful simplicity of his words ; and they were afraid to

disobey a teacher, who proved himself to be sent from God. Thus the necessity of repentance and holiness being once admitted, they were ready to receive any other doctrine which was built upon it: and since the great doctrine could not be imparted till Christ had died, it was in every way expedient that his earthly ministry should be short.

Upon the whole, I should be inclined to adopt the notion which has been held in ancient as well as in modern times, that our Saviour's ministry occupied part of three years; i. e. one whole year and part of two others^d. He perhaps began to preach in 28 or 29, and was crucified at the passover of 30 or 31. The greater part of his ministry was passed in Galilee: he went up to Jerusalem occasionally at the festivals, and when he was there he addressed the people, and worked miracles. That he should have attracted followers was nothing remarkable. Judas of Galilee, Theudas, and others, had perhaps produced a greater effect. But the singularity of his success consisted in his following a course the very opposite to that of these popular leaders. They attracted their followers by promising to remit the tribute; and they retained them by allowing, if not encouraging, them to live by pillage and violence. This was the beginning of the robbers and sicarii, who afterwards infested the country: and the multitudes, who were led to destruction by false Christs, were an aggravation to the many horrors of the Jewish war. But the true Christ raised no standard

^d Irenæus speaks of Jesus attending only three passovers, though he seems afterwards to contradict himself, II. 22. Clement of Alexandria supposed

his ministry to last only one year. *Strom.* I. 21. p. 407. So also Tertullian, *Adv. Jud.* VIII. p. 191. and Origen, *de Princip.* IV. 5. p. 160.

of revolt against the Roman government: he promised no deliverance from earthly masters: he allowed no indulgence of the passions; and yet he gained many followers, who obeyed him as a teacher sent from God. His miracles undoubtedly contributed much to this success. Judæa was not a country where the word of God, if left to itself, would have made much progress; but the common people could not perhaps distinguish between the real miracles of Jesus, and *the lying wonders*, with which the country then abounded. If Jesus worked a miracle, and told those who witnessed it to forsake their sins; and if another person appeared to work a miracle, and told the spectators that by such power he would lead them to conquer the Romans, it is plain that men of worldly minds were more likely to follow the latter than the former. The preaching therefore of Jesus cannot be viewed in its proper light, unless we bear in mind the state of feeling among the Jews in those days. We shall then see, that at the time of his death there were great numbers in Judæa and in Galilee, who were prepared to receive a pure and spiritual religion; one which required them to forsake their sins, and to believe that their descent from Abraham was not of itself sufficient to bring them to heaven. We have no data to ascertain the number of those persons who were sincere disciples of Jesus during his abode on earth. It seems to have been his intention to give to every person within the limits of Galilee and Judæa, a chance of being convinced of the necessity of repentance. He preached within no great distance of Tyre and Sidon on the north, and he visited part of the country on the east bank of the Jordan. He

sent out his twelve apostles to deliver the same instructions; and at another time he sent seventy disciples, who were to travel two together, and visit every town and village. He must have had great success in his own personal teaching, before he could have engaged so many followers in his cause; and we must know little of the rapidity with which religious impressions are conveyed, if we could doubt the effect of these men traversing the country, preaching a spiritual religion, and commanding attention by miraculous power. We know that 500 brethren were assembled in one place to see him after his resurrection^e; and the affectionate piety of the female character is very naturally exhibited in the case of several women, who left their homes in Galilee, and followed their instructor to Jerusalem^f. The concise narrative of the Evangelists may perhaps cause some persons to form an inadequate conception of the effect of our Saviour's preaching: but it is plain, that the fame of it was very widely spread even among persons, whose hearts did not entertain the precepts which he gave.

There was at this time a sect or body of men already existing in Judæa, who, it might be thought, could not have listened with indifference to the preaching of Jesus. It has sometimes excited surprise, that the Evangelists make no mention of the Essenes, whose singular habits are described by Philo Judæus and Josephus, and to whom the opponents of Christianity have sometimes pointed, as the source from which it was derived. The Essenes of Palestine, according to Philo and Josephus, were

^e 1 Cor. xv. 6. ^f Matt. xxvii. 55. Mark xv. 40, 41. Luke xxiii. 55.

about 4000 in their own day. Philo describes also another set of men under the name of Therapeutæ, who have been called contemplative Essenes, and who were found in the greatest numbers in Egypt^g. The accounts of these two sects have many points of agreement; and perhaps, as I shall observe presently, they may be traced to a common origin: but there seems no reason to conclude that Philo meant to speak of the Egyptian Therapeutæ as Essenes. It is plain from Josephus, that the Essenes were a Jewish sect; but the Therapeutæ, though traces of Judaism appear in their religious principles and customs, cannot be considered to have been originally or exclusively Jews^h. The Essenes were remarkable for their strict morality, for their ascetic and abstemious habits, for having a community of goods, and for living in villages apart from the great towns. Some of them held marriage to be unlawful; but all of them were regular in following some employment: their industry was conspicuous; and their early devotions, which were repeated every day, could only have been the fruits of sincere and genuine piety. There is undoubtedly much in the character of the Essenes, which may remind us of the habits of the early Christians. Eusebius, who was not much of a reflecting, still less of a critical

^g Philo treats of the Essenes, *Quod liber sit quisquis*, &c. vol. II. p. 457. and *de Vita contemplativa*, p. 471. So does Josephus, *Antiq.* XIII. 5, 9. XVIII. 1, 5. *de Bel. Jud.* II. 8, 2.

^h The identity of the Therapeutæ and Essenes was maintained by Scaliger, *de emend.*

temp. VI. p. 538. and by Mosheim *de rebus ante Const.* Cent. I. Introd. c. 11. not. 1. It was opposed by Valesius *ad Eus.* II. 17. Langius, *de Essæis*. Neander, *Allgem. Geschicht.* part I. p. 79. See Fabricius, *Lux. Salut. Evang.* p. 55. Triglandius, *Synagoga de Judæorum Sectis.*

historian, was so deceived by this resemblance, that he supposed Philo to have met with some Christian communities in the neighbourhood of Alexandria, and to have described them by the name of Therapeutæⁱ. That there is no foundation for such a notion, or for identifying the Therapeutæ with the Essenes, has been shewn satisfactorily by many writers^k. The Essenes, however, who were a Jewish sect, and lived in Palestine, could hardly have heard our Saviour or his apostles, without being struck by the truth of their preaching; and it is perhaps singular, that no mention is made of them by the Evangelists. In the first place, I would observe, that though the time when the Essenes first appeared is not distinctly known, there is reason to think that they had not been long in existence before this period: they may only now have been beginning to form their system, and the name of Essenes may not yet have been given them. In the next place, the accounts which we have of our Saviour's journeys and discourses are connected principally with the cities and towns: whereas the Essenes, as I have stated, avoided these places, and lived in small rustic communities of their own. If Philo and Josephus computed their number rightly at 4000 within the whole of Palestine, they must have been very thinly scattered over the country; and our Saviour in his circuits may seldom have met with them. According to Pliny, their principal settlements were in the neighbourhood of the Dead Sea^l; and this might

ⁱ Hist. Eccl. II. 17.

many writers.

^k See Brucker, *Hist. Philos.* vol. II. p. 759. who refers to^l Hist. Nat. V. 17.

account for the Evangelists making no mention of them, since our Saviour is not said to have visited that country. To all which I would add, that what I have said above of the great object of his preaching might lead us to expect, that he would not particularly have sought out the Essenes during the short period of his ministry. His object, as I have explained it, was not to unfold the whole of that great scheme which he was about to accomplish; this he left to his apostles, who were to come after him: his own preaching was to prepare men for a pure and spiritual religion; to remove from their minds all which impeded their salvation; and so to leave them open to receive the truth, whenever it was revealed to them. This being the case, the Essenes were already better prepared than most of the Jews of that time to receive the gospel: the moral discipline which was requisite, was not wholly new to them; and when our Saviour said, *I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance*, and when the towns of Judæa and Galilee were so abundantly filled with objects of the latter kind, we need not wonder that less of his attention was paid to the more moral, and comparatively more spiritual people, who were afterwards called Essenes.

I by no means wish to paint the morals and religion of the Essenes in too favourable colours. There was much in their system, which is unsuited for man in the discharge of those social duties, which God has intended him to fulfil. There was also a mixture of superstition, which seems clearly to point to an eastern origin; and if we suppose some of the

more rigid Pharisees, who saw with disgust the general depravity of the nation, to have admitted into their creed some speculative notions, which had travelled into Judæa from Persia, we shall perhaps have no incorrect idea of the origin of the Essenes^m. Still it must be remembered that their morality, if compared with that of the Jews at large, was vastly more pure and spiritual. The obstacles which were to be removed in their conversion to the gospel were as nothing, when contrasted with the mountains which shut out that heavenly view from the Scribes and Pharisees. The preaching of our Saviour, if viewed as a whole, may prove to us the great truth, that the chief impediment to the gospel is the corruption of the heart. It is not ignorance, it is not weakness of intellect, it is not a want of learning, which are the main causes of infidelity; it is an absence of that moral feeling, of that deep conviction of our own frailness, and of the necessity of holiness, which first leads men to justify what they are determined to commit, and then sets them to hate that which would prove their principles to be wrong. It was thus that our Saviour's preaching was directed, not so much to the head, as to the heart. It was in pursuance of feelings such as these, that the Jewish authorities never ceased till they had put him to death; and when his ascension to heaven left his disciples to finish the work, for which he had thus prepared the way, and to announce to mankind that redemption which his death and resurrection had now completed, their labours were

^m I may refer to my Bampton Lectures, p. 74.

met by the same resistance; and the same moral lesson is read in those mournful pages of ecclesiastical history, which record the sufferings and persecutions of the early Christians.

LECTURE II.

WE have now to trace the history of the gospel, when the earthly presence of our Saviour was withdrawn, and when eleven men of obscure rank and little education were left, humanly speaking, to themselves and their own exertions, to spread a new religion throughout the world. In order to form some notion of the difficulties which they had to encounter, we will consider the treatment which our Saviour received from three descriptions of persons ; the generality of the people throughout the country ; the Jewish authorities at Jerusalem ; and the representatives of the Roman government.

If we view the Jewish populace at different periods, we shall see them at one time anxious to make Jesus a king, at another compelling Pilate by their clamours to put him to death. The former was their own spontaneous impulse : they were excited to the latter by their priests. From both we may perhaps argue, that their feelings towards Jesus had little connexion with religion. They had seen his miracles ; they knew him to be kind and beneficent ; they heard him expose the vices of their superiors ; all which excited their curiosity ; and wherever he appeared, they could hardly fail to listen to him with pleasure. As many of them as were zealous for political freedom, might think that this was the end

which he had ultimately in view ; but when he came up to one festival after another, still with the same few obscure followers ; when he put himself at the head of no party, and manifested no resistance to foreign interference, the attachment which such persons had been inclined to feel would naturally subside : they might mistake his meekness for indecision ; and the lessons of obedience which he gave would be construed into cowardice. If they felt strongly, they might be glad to see him punished, as having raised hopes which he did not realize ; and if they felt little, they would be wholly indifferent whether one person more or less was led to crucifixion. Jesus Christ, as I have already observed, did not make himself generally known as the founder of a new religion. If he had, so abrupt a disclosure of it would have been received with horror by the zealous adherents of the Law of Moses. Again, therefore, I would repeat, that we must not consider the part which the populace took in the crucifixion of Jesus as proceeding from feelings of religion. They might have heard something of his intending to destroy the temple, and they might have fancied at the moment that he deserved to be put to death ; but they could have no definite idea of the doctrine which was about to be preached, nor could they have assigned any reason for hating his followers : they acted, as multitudes are often apt to act, without knowing their own motives ; and upon the whole I should say, that the general impression concerning the apostles would be, that they were the followers of a man who was put to death, but of whom they could not remember any evil.

It was not so with the Scribes and Pharisees, and the persons who composed the Jewish sanhedrim. To account for the antipathy which these persons felt towards Jesus, we need only remember what has been said of the nature of his preaching. He prepared men for receiving a spiritual religion, by enforcing the necessity of holiness and repentance. Both John the Baptist and himself had dwelt upon the terrors of a future judgment; and had said plainly, that *the children of the kingdom*, i. e. the natural descendants of Abraham, might finally *be cast out*. This was a hateful doctrine to men who placed the whole of their religion in outward forms; who were looked up to by the people as patterns of sanctity; and who now heard, that publicans and harlots might enter into heaven before them. This will perhaps be found a sufficient clue to the whole conduct of the Scribes and Pharisees. It might seem strange, that they thought of punishing the teacher of this new doctrine with death; but it is only strange, if we view the matter according to modern notions. In the times which we are now considering, and particularly in Judæa, the shedding of blood was an ordinary occurrence; and the pages of ecclesiastical history will prove to us sadly too often, that he who silences an adversary by death, persuades himself that he is benefiting the cause of truth.

I have here mentioned the Scribes and Pharisees: and the Pharisees were likely to inveigh loudly against Jesus for undervaluing the ceremonies of the Mosaic Law. This was the cloak which concealed their real feelings at the mortification of their pride, and the detection of their hypocrisy. But

the other Jewish sect, the Sadducees, were found equally hostile to the religion of Jesus; and what we know of their principles, will fully account for this part of their conduct. The Sadducees were a less numerous body than the Pharisees. But they made up in wealth what they wanted in numbers. The Pharisees had the highest character among the people for their reputed sanctity and adherence to the Law. The Sadducees were found mostly among the rich, and did not pretend to the merit of abstinence or austerity^a. If the Pharisee was too proud, the Sadducee was too worldly, to listen to the preaching of Jesus: and if this had not been the case, the peculiar creed of the Sadducees would have made it impossible for them to embrace his doctrine. That doctrine rested upon the resurrection, as its corner stone. It was because all men were to rise again, and be judged for their deeds, that John the Baptist and Jesus had preached the necessity of repentance; but all notion of a resurrection was rejected by the Sadducees^b: and if we merely regard this as a difference upon a speculative point, we know little of the human heart, if we seek any other ground for rancour and animosity. The Sadducees, however, though they denied a resurrection, by no means rejected the doctrine of a Providence. They believed that rewards and punishments were strictly administered by God in this life: and this may have been one reason why, as Josephus informs us^c, they were particularly severe in executing the punishments of the law. I mention this fact in the character of the Sadducees, because

^a Joseph. *Antiq.* XIII. 10, 6. Joseph. *de Bel. Jud.* II. 8, 14.

^b Matt. xxii. 23. Acts xxiii. 8. ^c L. c.

we shall find the remark of the Jewish historian confirmed by the history of the Apostles.

I proposed to consider, in the third place, the treatment which Jesus received from the representatives of the Roman government. This however requires us to notice little else than the character and conduct of one individual. Pontius Pilate held the office of procurator of Judæa during the whole of our Saviour's ministry; but he does not appear to have been called upon to notice him till the pass-over, at which he ordered his execution. The fate of Judas of Galilee, Theudas, and perhaps many other popular leaders, made it difficult for Jesus to disclose himself in his real character. He was the deliverer who was expected by the whole nation; and yet if he had appeared as such, he was certain to have raised an insurrection, and as certain to have been put down by the Roman power. We may find many instances in the Gospels of Jesus being placed in this dilemma, and of his prudently escaping from it. The same difficulty will also account for his extreme caution in declaring himself to be the Christ. He revealed the great secret to a few; and they that remembered his words afterwards, might call to mind many expressions which led to this conclusion: but there is no reason to think that the Roman governor, who resided at Cæsarea, had ever felt the slightest uneasiness, even if he had heard a rumour, concerning Jesus. It was an incidental expression from the chief priests, which made him know that Jesus was a Galilean^d; and it seems plain from his conversation with Jesus, that he then heard for the first time of his being called

^d Luke xxiii. 5, 6.

the Christ, and King of the Jews. Pilate would probably know what was meant by the Christ; and if Jesus had really made pretensions to be a king, the suspicions of the Roman governor might naturally have been excited. The Jews indeed spoke out plainly, and accused Jesus of resisting the payment of tribute; but notwithstanding all this, Pilate declared him to be innocent. He most probably consulted his Roman officers concerning the truth of these charges; and three times he publicly declared, that he found no fault in Jesus. The sentence of crucifixion was at length extorted from him through fear of being himself accused of disaffection to the emperor: and the infamy, which attaches to the memory of Pilate, should be confined to his permitting the execution of a man, whom in his own conscience he believed to be guiltless. When the feast of the passover was ended, Pilate would probably return to Cæsarea; and the Acts of the Apostles confirm what we might have expected to be the case, that he took no part in persecuting the followers of Jesus.

There is a story however told concerning Pilate, which, if the circumstances of it have any foundation in truth, ought to be considered in this place. The early Christian writers appealed very confidently to the Acts of Pilate, or the official account which was transmitted by him to Rome concerning the crucifixion of Jesus. Justin Martyr, who wrote about the year 140, is the earliest writer who mentions these Acts^e: but Tertullian, who wrote at the end of the same century, supplies us with much more detail, and says, that Tiberius proposed to the

^e Apol. I. 35. p. 65: 48. p. 72.

senate, that Jesus Christ should be admitted as a God. According to the same authority, the senate rejected the proposal; but the account sent by Pilate made such an impression upon Tiberius, that from that time he shewed particular favour and indulgence to the Jews^f. The statement of Tertulian has been repeated by later writers^g; and the degree of credit which is due to it, has led to much discussion. That Tiberius should have been willing to acknowledge Jesus as a god, can perhaps scarcely be believed. It was about this time, that he began to plunge more deeply into his licentious profligacy; and though the union of vice and superstition is by no means unusual, the mind of Tiberius was certainly not likely to be interested at present with a question of this kind. It was about two years before, that he had prohibited the senate from paying divine honours to his mother^h; and though he had allowed the cities of Asia Minor in the ninth year of his reign to erect a temple to himself, his mother, and the senateⁱ, he refused the same honour two years afterwards, when the offer was made by a district in Spain^k. Most of the events of the years 29, 30, and 31, were recorded in that part of the Annals of Tacitus, which is lost: but the circumstances which I have just mentioned might rather lead us to expect, that if Tiberius had proposed to increase the number of deities, the senate would not have refused. We should also recollect, that if Pilate transmitted his account soon after his own return from Jerusalem, he would not be likely to say

^f Apol. 5. p. 6: 21. p. 20.

^g Eus. *H. E.* II. 2. Orosius
VII. 4.

^h Tacit. *Annal.* V. 2.

ⁱ Ib. IV. 15.

^k Ib. IV. 37.

any thing of Jesus being looked upon as a god. He would acquaint the emperor with his own conviction of the innocence of Jesus ; but nothing had as yet transpired, which would lead him to think that Jesus was considered, even by his own followers, to be more than human. Neither is it easy to understand, why Tiberius, even if he was led to think favourably of Jesus, should therefore be induced to confer favours on the Jews. Pilate's official despatches could only have represented the Jewish authorities as cruel, malicious, and unjust : they had murdered the man whom Tiberius, according to this same account, was wishing to honour as a god : and the jealous mind of the emperor would scarcely have inclined him to deify a man, to whom his own procurator had given the title of king of the Jews. All these considerations may make us pause in admitting the story, as it was embellished in the time of Tertullian ; but the earlier and more simple statement of Justin Martyr can hardly be set aside : nor can we think that in a defence delivered publicly to the emperor, he would have referred him to Pilate's official report, if such a document was not in existence. It could be proved, if proof was necessary, that the governors of provinces were in the habit of transmitting to Rome an account of the events which had happened¹; and it ought rather to excite our surprise, if Pilate had not informed the emperor of the crucifixion of Jesus. It is almost impossible to suppose, that the Fathers were mistaken in believing some such document to be preserved in the ar-

¹ See Pliny's celebrated letter to Trajan, X. 97. Philo mentions such Acts being sent from Alexandria, *De Legat.* p. 570.

chives. We know that in the third century a work called the Acts of Pilate was forged, which contained calumnies against the Christians^m: more than one spurious letter, purporting to have been written by Pilate, is still extantⁿ; but the very fact of these forgeries rather supports the notion, that some genuine Acts of Pilate were known to have existed. All therefore which I would infer concerning this matter is, that Pilate sent to Tiberius an account of the crucifixion of Jesus; and that the early Christians knew the substance of it not to be unfavourable to their Founder's character^o. We might conclude for certain, that Pilate would make the same statement to the emperor, which he had made to the chief priests: he would assert that he knew of no fault in Jesus; and the remarkable anecdote, which is preserved by St. Matthew^p, of Pilate's wife having been troubled in a dream concerning him, might perhaps have led Pilate to reflect still more upon the iniquity of his sentence. He would also be likely to add, what the Evangelists assure us was not unknown to him, and which he might have heard from some of his own officers quartered at Jerusalem, that the chief priests had put Jesus to death, because they envied him his popularity. It is true, that it was about this time, as I mentioned in my last lecture, that Tiberius rescinded the decree which had banished the Jews from Rome.

^m Eus. *H. E.* I. 9. X. 5.

ⁿ See Fabricius, *Cod. Apoc.* N. T. p. 298, 972.

^o See Lardner, *Testimonies of Ancient Heathens*, c. II. Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. I. p. 422, 732. Th. Hasæus, *de de-*

creto Tiberii, &c. Bibliothèque Germanique, tom. 32. p. 147: tom. 33. p. 12. Altmann, *de epistola P. Pilati*. Balduinus, *Com. ad edicta vet. princ. Rom. de Christianis*, p. 22.

^p XXVII. 19.

But I have already observed, that there could have been nothing in Pilate's despatch concerning the Jews, which dictated such a measure; and Philo has preserved a curious fact, if it be true, that the banishment of the Jews had been owing to the intrigues of Sejanus, who feared lest their attachment to the emperor should interfere with his own designs; and that when the day of retribution came, and the ambitious favourite was destroyed, Tiberius discovered what he had done, and permitted the Jews to return^q.

Such then was the state of public feeling in Judæa concerning Jesus Christ at the time of his crucifixion. The Roman authorities had heard little concerning him, and felt no jealousy or suspicion of his designs. With the people at large he had at times been popular; but they could not understand his character; and they looked on with indifference, perhaps with a conviction of his guilt, when they saw their own rulers and the Roman officers combine in putting him to death. The only persons who were zealous in this nefarious murder, were the members of the Jewish sanhedrim. They had now silenced the man, who had shewn such insight into their hearts: and we have a curious instance how prejudice will operate even against conviction, in their bribing the soldiers to say, that the disciples came by night and stole the body of Jesus from the sepulchre. This proves that the fact of Jesus being seen alive again was known to the chief priests. They had their information from the soldiers themselves, who must have told them of the stone being rolled away, and of their own terror at seeing the

^q De Legat. ad Caium, p. 569.

angel. Though Jesus shewed himself but seldom after his resurrection, the fact must have been known to some persons at least beside his immediate followers. To those who doubted, it was an obvious expedient to go to the sepulchre, and see whether the body was really there. The conclusion, which such an inspection would incline them to draw, was met by the story circulated by the high priests, that the disciples had come by night and stolen the body. This was sufficient to account for the appearance of the sepulchre: and St. Matthew informs us, that this story concerning the disciples was commonly reported among the Jews at the time of his writing his Gospel. Justin Martyr has added, (and his evidence in this instance can hardly, I think, be doubted,) that the Jews sent persons into every country to spread this story^r. It was necessary, that some steps of this kind should be taken beyond the limits of Judæa. The Passover being now ended, many of the foreign Jews would return to their own country; and the chief priests would be anxious, that they should not carry with them an account of the resurrection of Jesus. The return of these men to their homes would furnish them with the means of spreading the report in the manner mentioned by Justin Martyr: and we may perhaps conclude, that the first account which the Jews in some countries received concerning Jesus, was coupled with this notorious falsehood of his disciples having carried off his body from the sepulchre. The effect of such a calumny, superadded to the

^r Dial. cum Tryph. 17. p. 117: *Salut. Lux Evang.* c. VI. 108. p. 202: 117. p. 210: p. 121. 120. p. 213. See Fabricius,

ignominy of a public crucifixion, is too plain to require me to dwell upon it.

Jesus appears to have staid at least eight days in Jerusalem after his resurrection: or to speak more properly, the place where he shewed himself occasionally during this interval was Jerusalem or its vicinity. The disciples, after this, returned into Galilee, which it was natural for them to do when the Passover was ended. Some of them seem to have resumed their former occupation on the lake of Gennesaret; and while they were there, they again saw Jesus appear among them. We have no means of ascertaining how many days they continued in Galilee. The whole number of days between the resurrection and ascension of Jesus was forty; and we know that the ascension took place near Bethany, which was not quite two miles from Jerusalem. If we were to seek a reason for Jesus thus sending his disciples into Galilee, and then bringing them back again to Judæa, we should perhaps find it in his wishing to withdraw them for a while from public notice, and then sending them to attend the approaching feast of Pentecost. It was on every account to be expected that Jerusalem would be the place, from whence the new religion would proceed; and the miracle, which was intended to be worked on the day of Pentecost, required the attendance of those crowds, who were assembled only at Jerusalem.

It is not necessary for me to dwell upon the parting address, which Jesus delivered to his disciples. It is plain, that some of them up to that time entertained a hope of an earthly kingdom; nor did his answer fully explain to them the nature of their delusion. This, as well as many other points, was

left to the successive illumination which he intended to impart to them by the Holy Ghost; and nothing is more striking than the contrast between the worldly notions of the disciples, up to the time of their Lord's ascension, and their spiritual views of Christ's kingdom, as soon as the Holy Ghost had come upon them. Jesus now told them to wait in Jerusalem, till this promised illumination should arrive: he told them also, that they were to preach his religion throughout the earth; and his last words must have seemed to them particularly strange, when he spoke of their preaching, not only in Jerusalem and Judæa, but in Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the earth.

We are now arrived at the most critical period in the history of the Apostles. The days were truly A. D.
31.
come, when the bridegroom was taken from them. The city, to which they were returning, was filled with persons, who not fifty days before had put their Master to death; and his prophetic warnings, which had been so fatally accomplished in his own person, taught them what they were to expect for themselves. We may say, as of our first parents, that "the world was all before them;" and friendless as they were, without money, without learning, and, which might almost be added, diffident of their own cause, they were to go forth and promulgate a religion, which was to triumph over polytheism and philosophy, and to plant the cross of Christ in the capital of the Roman world. Well may we say with the Psalmist, *This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes!* The Apostles no doubt felt some conviction of this sort in their own breasts; and though as yet they knew but very imperfectly

A. D. 31. the high commission which they had received, the thought of their Master being in heaven consoled them for his loss, and we read that *they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy.*

They had still ten days to pass before the promise, which had been so solemnly repeated, was fulfilled; and the time, though short in itself, must have been one of intense anxiety. The eleven apostles were not entirely left to themselves. Some other of the followers of Jesus were still with them; and we might suppose, from the nature of the case, that they were of the most zealous. We know that some of them had attended upon Jesus as long as the apostles themselves, from his baptism to his ascension^s; and we may conclude that some, perhaps many of them, were of the number of those seventy disciples, who had been sent out by Jesus to preach the gospel. It is not certain whether any other persons, beside the eleven apostles, were present at the ascension; but from the promise of the Holy Ghost, and the commission to preach the gospel, we might perhaps conclude, that this last and solemn scene was witnessed by the apostles only. When they returned to Jerusalem, they appear to have gone to some place, where they were in the habit of assembling; and our curiosity might be excited to know, how so many persons contrived to meet frequently together without attracting notice. The danger of their situation appears to be greatly increased by what St. Luke expressly tells us, that *they were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God*^t. That they were in the habit of attending daily in the temple, is said in many pas-

^s Acts i. 21.

^t xxiv. 53.

sages of the Acts^u; and some writers have conjectured, that the upper chamber, in which they are stated to have assembled, was an apartment over the porticos of the temple^x. It has even been supposed, that they were in a room in this same place, when the Holy Ghost fell upon them on the day of Pentecost; and Josephus certainly speaks of there being many such apartments connected with the temple^y. This however seems rather improbable. That they should attend in the temple at the hours of prayer, was by no means extraordinary: and they may have been less likely to attract attention by that public worship, than by meeting together in a private house. Jerusalem was perhaps filled with strangers during the whole interval between the Passover and Pentecost: and some who came from a distance to attend the former feast, would be likely to stay for the latter also. This would cause the temple to be visited by many worshippers every day: and even if the apostles and their friends had gone thither in a body, they need not have been particularly noticed in the crowd of strangers. If it could be proved that these *ὑπερῶνα*, or upper chambers, which are mentioned by Josephus, were open to all persons who chose to occupy them; or if there was reason to think, that persons of the same nation, who attended the festivals, made use of these apartments for want of more private accommodation, then we might perhaps conclude, that the apostles and their company, being all of them Galilæans, had taken possession of one of these chambers, and there with-

A. D.
31.

^u Acts ii. 46. v. 20, 21, 42. ^y Antiq. VIII. 3, 2. XI. 5.

^x See L. de Dieu, Krebsius, 4: *de Bel. Jud.* V. 5, 5.
^{ad} Act. i. 13.

A. D. 31. out molestation or suspicion laid the foundation of that religion, which was to rise upon the ruins of the very building where they met. However this may be, the room, in which they assembled, was sufficiently spacious to hold 120 persons; and when they elected Matthias, we can hardly suppose that they were not in private, and secure from interruption. We need not conclude, that the number of disciples in Jerusalem was confined to 120. This was the number, which assembled to fill up the place of Judas: but it does not follow, that every individual disciple was admitted to this election. It might seem from the words of St. Peter, that all these 120 persons had accompanied Jesus from the beginning of his ministry^z: and this may have been the ground of their being thus selected. But if there were 120 persons now in Jerusalem, who had been followers of Jesus for so long a period, we must naturally conclude, that the believers altogether were much more numerous. St. Luke mentions the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus; and there are many reasons, which lead me to think that St. Luke was himself at Jerusalem at this time. Whether he was converted before the day of Pentecost, might perhaps be doubted, though some ancient writers have supposed him to have been one of the seventy disciples^a. The brothers or cousins of our Lord are also mentioned as being present at these meetings: and if any credit could be attached to the lists which have been made of the seventy disciples, we might know the names of several others of these founders of our religion. But it is demonstrable, that these lists were composed by bringing together the most

^z See Acts i. 21. ^a See Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. II. p. 236.

prominent names which are mentioned in the Acts and Epistles^b; and though it is probable that some, if not all, of the seven deacons were with the apostles from the time of the ascension, the only two names, which can be placed with certainty in that most distinguished company, are those of Barsabas and Matthias.

A. D.
13.

These meetings of the eleven apostles and the other disciples appear to have been held daily, but even now some preeminence was conceded to the eleven: and no greater proof could be given of this, than their thinking it necessary to fill up the vacancy, which was caused by the treachery of Judas. This was done in some part of those ten days, which elapsed between the Ascension and Pentecost: and the form of election was perhaps the same, which was used in the church for some time after. The apostles seem to have decided, that none should be eligible, but those who had attended upon Jesus through the whole of his ministry. Out of these, the disciples selected two, who were most deserving: and the pretensions of these two were decided by lot. This is the first time that the names of Barsabas and Matthias are mentioned in the New Testament: and since it is also the last, we cannot hope to discover any further particulars concerning them. They are stated by some early writers^c to have been of the number of the seventy disciples, and the words of St. Peter make this not impro-

^b Lists are given by Fabricius, *Append. ad Hippol.* vol. I. p. 41. Townsend, *New Testament arranged*, vol. I. p. 309. See the three books concerning

the life and death of Moses, published by Gaulminius.

^c Eus. *H. E.* I. 12. Epiphanius, *Anacephal.* c. 125. vol. II. p. 138.

A. D.
31.

bable. An absurd tradition is preserved by Clement of Alexandria, that Matthias was the same person as Zacchæus^d: but the time of Zacchæus first becoming acquainted with our Saviour makes this impossible. The same writer ascribes a saying to Matthias, which has nothing in it to lead us to admit or to reject it: he is reported to have said, “that we
“ought to strive against and mortify the flesh, not
“indulging it for the enjoyment of intemperate
“pleasure, but we should improve the soul by faith
“and knowledge^e.” It is perhaps suspicious, that a precept, which among Christians may be almost called a truism, should be ascribed particularly to any one of the apostles: and if the name of Matthias was thus made a vehicle of unfounded traditions, we need not trouble ourselves to expose the inconsistency of several Gnostic sects professing to follow him^f. Concerning Joseph or Barsabas, who was also called Justus, we know nothing else, except that Papias, who lived in the first century, preserved a tradition of his having drunk poison, but received no injury from it^g. The words of our Saviour^h might prepare us to expect a miracle such as this: but where the evidence is so small on which these traditions rest, it is safest to leave Matthias and Barsabas to the unquestionable distinction of being thought worthy to be numbered with the eleven apostles. I shall have occasion to observe presently, that the notion of Barsabas being the same person with Barnabas, is entitled to little weight. I have

^d Strom. IV. 6. p. 579.

^e Strom. III. 4. p. 523.

^f This was the case with the Nicolaitans, Marcionites, Valentinians, and Basilidians. See

Clem. Alex. l. c. Ib. VII. 17. p. 898, 900.

^g Apud Eus. *H. E.* III. 39.

^h Mark xvi. 18.

said, that the pretensions of Barsabas and Matthias were decided by lot; and such is generally supposed to be the meaning of St. Luke's words: but Mosheim, whose opinion is always entitled to consideration, has endeavoured to shew, that the disciples did not cast lots, but simply gave their votesⁱ. In either case we cannot doubt, that he, to whom they prayed, that he would point out the person to be chosen, directed their judgment, or caused the lot to fall upon the worthiest object: and if we see reason to think that the Lord, the searcher of hearts, who was addressed in this solemn prayer, was their beloved Master, to whose service they were about to consecrate another faithful follower, we have an instance of divine worship paid to Jesus at the earliest period in which it could have been offered.

This election was perhaps the only affair of moment, which happened before the day of Pentecost: and there is no reason to think, that the expectation of any thing extraordinary had brought them together on that day. There is more room for discussion as to the number of persons who were present. Roman Catholic writers contend, that the Virgin Mary was one of them: and some protestants have supposed, that the Holy Ghost did not descend on the apostles only^k. It certainly is not improbable, that other persons were present beside the twelve apostles: but when we consider the terms of the original promise, and the intimate connexion which it had with the preaching of the gospel, we shall perhaps see reason to think, that this extraordinary

ⁱ De rebus ante Const. Cent. tom. I. p. 383. Benson, *History of the first planting, &c.*
I. c. 14. not. c.

^k See Tillemont, *Mémoires*, book I. c. 1, 2.

A. D.
31.

and palpable manifestation of the Holy Spirit was vouchsafed to the apostles only. I do not mean to say, that the effect produced by it was not imparted subsequently to other believers; and the gift of tongues was perhaps not uncommon: but we never read afterwards of the fiery appearance: and it is not unreasonable to suppose, that this first effusion of the Holy Ghost was communicated in such a way as to distinguish the apostles from the other believers.

A sound was heard, as the violent rushing of wind; and it was not only perceived in the room where they were sitting, but when St. Peter addressed the multitudes outside, he appealed to them also as having heard it. In addition to this, a fiery appearance was seen: and though the generally received notion has been that *fiery tongues* rested upon each of the apostles, the words may admit of the interpretation, that these drops or particles of flame were distributed to each of them¹. The passage appears always to have been considered obscure; and Theodoret extracted from it the still more extraordinary meaning, that the tongues of the apostles appeared to be divided, and touched by a lambent flame. This interpretation was probably adopted, in order to make the miracle emblematical of its immediate effect, the gift of tongues: but the expression, *tongues of fire* or *flame*, had perhaps no reference to the tongue, as the organ of speech, and merely signified a small, separate particle of flame, which settled on each of the apostles; and whatever its appearance may have been, it was not merely

¹ Ὁφθησαν αὐτοῖς διαμεριζόμεναι γλῶσσαι ὡσεὶ πυρός. Acts ii. 3.

momentary, but was something which all the people could see, while St. Peter was addressing them. A. D.
31.

The history of this miracle may certainly seem to confirm the notion, that the apostles were occupying an apartment in the temple, and this would account for so large a multitude being assembled so near and at the time. If St. Luke had not mentioned it, we should have known that Jerusalem was at this season filled with foreign Jews, who attended the feast of Pentecost. Many of them, as I have observed, may have staid there from the last Passover: and we can hardly suppose, that such a crowd of them was assembled in any other place than in the temple. This was the last and most solemn day of the festival, when the temple was most likely to be thronged with worshippers: and it was about nine o'clock in the morning^m, which was one of the Jewish hours of prayer, when the Holy Ghost descended in an appearance of fire upon the apostles. Many of the worshippers would now be beginning to assemble; and while they were filling the courts and porticos of the temple, they seem to have heard the extraordinary sound, which I have already described. Perhaps the room, which contained the apostles, was sensibly shaken, as it was upon another occasion, when they were filled with the Holy Ghostⁿ; and the motion may have been felt in other parts of the building. However this may have been, it is plain that the apostles came forth and mixed with the multitudes below. It is impossible to describe, or even to conceive the sensations, which must now have come over them. The mysterious noise, the lambent flame, were signs which their senses could

^m Acts ii. 15.

ⁿ Acts iv. 31.

A. D.
31.

not mistake: they perceived at once, that the long expected promise was fulfilled; and in a moment they found within themselves the inclination and the power to converse in languages which they had never learnt. We may suppose, that the worshippers from different countries would, on account of their common languages, form distinct parties in the courts of the temple. The attention of all of them was arrested by the noise and by the flame; and to their still greater astonishment, they heard the persons, on whom the flame rested, addressing each of them in their respective languages. Beside the foreign Jews who were assembled, there would also be many of the resident inhabitants of Jerusalem: and some of these might be aware that the room in question was occupied by a party of Galilæans. The foreign Jews, who had heard this, would be still more surprised, when the apostles descended and addressed them in their own languages: but the miracle would not be so apparent to the native Jews, who only heard a language which was strange to them, and conveyed no intelligible sound. Being perhaps already prejudiced against these Galilæans, they sought to destroy the impression produced by the miracle; and forgetting the extreme improbability of men selecting that time and place for a convivial meeting, they could think of no more plausible calumny, than that of charging the apostles with drunkenness. St. Peter, who was always the most forward and zealous of the apostles, having heard this calumny from some of the Jews who were near him, immediately addressed the multitude in a speech of considerable length: and the remark of some of the Fathers is perhaps entitled to attention, that in this instance

the nature of the miracle was changed, and though St. Peter used the common language of his country, it seemed to each of his hearers as if they heard their own^o. It cannot be doubted, that St. Peter was understood by the multitude at large; and though some persons have observed, with a view to depreciate the miracle, that a common language was spoken, as a medium of communication, by the Jews of every country, yet even if we suppose St. Peter to have delivered his address in this common dialect, or if we suppose all the Jews to have understood sufficiently the language of Palestine, that will not allow us to explain away their own expression of astonishment, *How hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?*

A. D.
31.

The effect of St. Peter's address was electrical. We have a right to ascribe some feelings of devotion, at least at that time, to the Jews who were now fulfilling the object of their long and troublesome journey. They were not now under any control from the priests and sanhedrim: many of them perhaps had heard no calumnies against Jesus: they were left to the natural and spontaneous feelings of their own hearts; and now at a season of great religious excitement, within the national sanctuary of their faith, they saw and heard irresistible proofs of a communication from heaven. St. Peter's allusion to the unjust crucifixion of Jesus would not touch the consciences of the foreign Jews, who were guiltless of his blood: they would know, that the passage, quoted from the Psalms, had always been applied by them to the Messiah: and when St. Peter spoke of the recent

^o See Arnobius, lib. I. pag. 27. Erasmus *ad l.* The notion is refuted by Benson, *l. c.* p. 29, 30. Castalio *ad l.*

A. D. 31. miracle as *that which ye now hear and see*; when he thus appealed to their senses, and when Jesus was named as the author of this miracle by one on whom the flame was still resting, and while the awful noise was perhaps still passing over them, we cannot wonder if many of them *were pricked to the heart*, and exclaimed in the impulse of the moment, *Men and brethren, what shall we do?* The result was, that 3000 persons were baptized: and since this was the first conversion since the ascension of Jesus, we may observe, that what the apostles required of all the converts, was repentance. St. Peter's speech also implied, that they believed Jesus to be the Christ: and the fact of all these converts being Jews will at once explain, why more information was not given upon this point by St. Peter. His hearers had only to transfer their previous notions of the Messiah to Jesus of Nazareth, and to believe that he had risen from the dead, and St. Peter assured them, that this belief would give them remission of all their former sins. We cannot doubt, but that the form of baptism, which had been delivered to them by their Master not many weeks before, was used by them in the admission of all these converts: and by telling them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, St. Peter required them to profess their belief, that the Son of God, whose name was there united with the Father and the Holy Ghost, was no other than Jesus of Nazareth, who had died and risen again.

Before we continue the history of these first believers in Jerusalem, I should wish to consider, what was likely to be the effect in distant countries, when some of them returned to their homes. We can hardly doubt, that of the 3000 persons who were

baptized on the day of Pentecost, many, if not most, were foreign Jews. They had come to Jerusalem for the feast, and would now be returning to their several countries. St. Luke enumerates some of the quarters from which they came, and he perhaps mentioned those districts, in which the Jews were known to be most numerous^p. Josephus informs us, that there were many myriads of his countrymen beyond the Euphrates^q, who had probably remained there ever since the captivity, and kept up a constant communication with Jerusalem. The Acts of the Apostles will shew, that the Jews abounded through the whole of Asia Minor. In the neighbourhood of Alexandria, or rather in the whole of Egypt, they are computed by Philo at a million^r; and with respect to Cyrene, we know of one person who came from that country, and who carried our Saviour's cross. This Simon is described by St. Mark as the father of Alexander and Rufus: and it is worthy of remark, that St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans, sends a salutation to Rufus and his mother^s. If the same Rufus be meant in both places, it is perhaps not too much to conclude, that his father Simon was one of the first converts to the gospel; and he may have been selected to bear the cross of Jesus, as being known to be one of his followers. I have already alluded to the Romans, who are said in this passage to have been resident at Jerusalem, both Jews and proselytes; and I remarked, that they might perhaps have been the Jews, who had been banished from Italy a few years before by the edict

A. D.
31.

^p This passage may be compared with one in Philo Judæus, *de leg. ad Caium*, p. 587.

^q Antiq. XV. 3, 1. XVII. 2, 2.

XVIII. 9, 1. Philo says the same, *l. c.* p. 578.

^r Adv. Flaccum, p. 523.

^s xvi. 13.

A. D. 31. of Tiberius. We know, that this edict must have sent several thousand persons to seek an asylum in foreign countries; and there was no place, to which they would have looked more naturally, or been more likely to be kindly received, than Judæa. I have also stated, that it was about this time that Tiberius revoked his decree, and permitted the Jews to return to Rome; so that many were perhaps waiting in Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost to be over, that having been present at its solemnity, they might return to their former residence in Rome. In this way it is not improbable, that within a few weeks after the feast of Pentecost some persons would be found, who had been baptized into the name of Christ, in Persia and in Egypt, in Rome and in Cyrenaica. How far these persons were likely to carry back a true idea of Christianity, and whether some of them may not have done harm by representing it imperfectly, may furnish matter for future consideration: but it is difficult to think that any of the persons, who were baptized on the day of Pentecost, could ever have forgotten the sight which they had witnessed, and the impression which it had made. They must have known, that their own conversion was owing to twelve men being enabled to speak languages, which they had never learnt: and if they reflected at all, they must have known, that this power could have come only from God, and that God would never have given it for the propagation of a false religion.

We may now return to consider what may truly be called the infant church at Jerusalem. Of the 3000 who were baptized on the day of Pentecost, I have conjectured that some, perhaps many, returned

to their homes in foreign countries. But we are told, that the number of believers increased daily ; A. D.
31.
and they are stated shortly after at 5000^t, if that is not rather the number of new converts who were made in a single day. The still crowded state of Jerusalem was perhaps favourable to the spreading of the gospel. The apostles would be likely to meet with many friends from Galilee, who had been disciples of Jesus while he was in their country, and would now assist them in making converts. But in viewing the astonishing progress of Christianity, we must never lose sight of the fact, that the apostles were daily exhibiting stupendous miracles. The gift of tongues, as I said before, would not be so striking to the settled inhabitants of Jerusalem : but when the same persons, who in their daily visits to the temple had seen a cripple lying there, saw him suddenly rise up, walk, and leap, at the pronouncing of the name of Jesus Christ—when this was done at the hour of prayer, when the temple was most crowded—and St. Luke perhaps singled this instance out of many for detail, merely because he had watched the whole of it himself—when this state of things was going on daily and hourly, we may well take St. Luke's expression literally, and believe that *fear came on every soul*. If we read the Gospels, we see what was the effect of the miracles of Jesus. The fame of them spread rapidly through the country ; and wherever he went, the multitudes hung upon his words. It was not his design, as I have observed more than once, to unfold in his lifetime the whole of that religion, of which his death was the

^t Acts iv. 4.

A. D.
31.

seal : but it is plain, that his miracles would have persuaded thousands to embrace any doctrine which he had chosen to announce : and the same effect was produced by the miracles of the apostles. The inference was irresistible, as I have observed with respect to the gift of tongues, that God would not have given preternatural assistance to men, who were propagating a false religion. We must remember also, that the apostles did not only receive this miraculous power themselves, but they were able to confer it upon others. The influence of the Holy Ghost was evidently something which could not be mistaken ; it shewed itself by visible and infallible signs, which terrified even while they convinced : and if 3000 converts were made on the first day, we may reasonably suppose that the numbers increased rapidly.

The remark will, I believe, be generally found correct, that every movement in religion on a large scale has shewn itself first among the lower or less educated orders. It requires perhaps some master mind to give the first impulse ; but our Saviour asserted a general principle, as well as a particular fact, when he said that *the poor have the gospel preached to them*, or rather, that *the poor receive the gospel*. In the case now before us, the first impulse was given from above. Man could no more have devised the scheme of Christianity, than he could have accomplished it ; and the learned or the powerful were not the instruments employed by God in the infancy of the church. The scriptures are sometimes quoted, as representing the first Christians to have had a community of goods ; but Mosheim has

satisfactorily shewn, that this, in the literal sense of the expression, was not the case^u. In the simple language of scripture, the believers *were of one heart and of one soul*: they were brothers not merely in name; and they looked upon their goods, not as exclusively their own, but as a store from which something might be spared to succour those who were in need. Some of them did literally sell their property, not perhaps the whole of it, (for that would have made themselves dependent in future upon public charity,) but they converted a part of it into money, and made a common stock, which the apostles distributed to the poor. The immediate institution of this fund, and the zeal with which it was raised, are proofs that many of the poorer classes embraced the gospel: but they prove also, that some were converted who possessed this world's goods; and the future labours of Barnabas will account for St. Luke having singled him out as one of these charitable contributors. It has been conjectured, as I observed before, that Barnabas was the same person with Barsabas^x, who was a candidate with Matthias for the vacant apostleship; and several ancient writers have said that he was of the number of the seventy disciples^y: but the fact of Barnabas being a Levite seems effectually to refute either of these notions. Barsabas had accompanied Jesus from the beginning of his ministry, which we can hardly suppose would have been the case with a Levite: and

A. D.
31.

^u See his *Dissertationes ad Historiam Ecclesiasticam pertinentes*, vol. II. Diss. I.

^x See Lord Barrington, *Misc. Sac.* vol. II. p. 37.

^y Clem. Alex. *Strom.* II. 20.

p. 489. Eus. *H. E.* I. 12. Epiphanius *Hær.* XX. 4. vol. I. p. 50. *Anacephal.* c. 125. vol. II. p. 138. See Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. I. p. 1044, 1187.

A. D. 31. the narrative of St. Luke seems clearly to shew, that Barnabas laid the price of his field at the apostles' feet, as the offering of a heart, which was then overflowing with the first impulse imparted by the gospel. The family of Barnabas had settled in Cyprus; perhaps he himself was born there: but his office of a Levite would require him, as soon as he was of the proper age, to reside mostly in Jerusalem: and if the statement of a late writer^z is authentic, that he had studied with St. Paul in the school of Gamaliel, he could not long have entered upon his office.

While the gospel was thus spreading so rapidly, (though perhaps we have been considering the events of only a few days,) we should naturally expect that the priests and sanhedrim would not be idle in attempting to suppress it. We are told expressly, that the apostles delivered their doctrine daily in the temple: their miracles were worked there, and in the face of day; and the thousands, who were converted, could not escape notice. The same persons, who had crucified Jesus, could not see with indifference that that measure, which they had thought so successful, was likely to be of no avail; but the remarks, which were made at the beginning of this lecture, will account for the apostles not being materially impeded by the sanhedrim. I have observed, that Jesus was evidently not an object of jealousy to the Roman government. The procurator sacrificed him to preserve his own character for loyalty to the emperor: and had he continued at Jerusalem, it is

^z Alexander, a monk of Cyprus, who probably lived at a late period, (though Baronius places him in the fifth century.) and is worthy of little or no credit.

A. D.
31.

probable that the Jews might again have succeeded in prejudicing him against the Galileans. But Pilate would return to Cæsarea, as soon as the Passover was ended; and though his absence might be thought in some respects to leave the Jewish authorities a greater power of acting as they pleased, it is plain, that the chief priests were not seconded in this instance by the wishes of the people. I have said, that Jesus had on several occasions been the object of popular regard: even at the last Passover the multitude had followed him with enthusiasm; and the sanhedrim was aware, that an attempt against his life might excite *an uproar among the people*. This was the real reason of their bringing him before Pilate as guilty of a political crime: they had themselves condemned him to death for blasphemy against God; and the story, which they told to Pilate, was merely to induce him to execute the sentence, which they were afraid of attempting themselves. When the apostles took up the cause, which was expected to have been extinguished by the death of Jesus, they revived among the people the same kindly feelings, which had been exhibited toward their Master. The miracles which they worked, independent of their beneficent character, and the real good which resulted from them, could not fail to raise the workers of them in the eyes of the people. The chief priests were well aware of this, and took their measures against the apostles with extreme caution. On one occasion we read of their taking them into custody, but *without violence, for they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned*. More than once the apostles were imprisoned, and corporal punishment was inflicted on them; but

A. D. 31. each of these attempts rather shewed the timidity of their opponents, and strengthened the cause which they were intended to depress. To say nothing of the apostles being released from prison by a miracle, they declared openly in the council that they intended to proceed; and the moment of their dismissal saw them once more preaching in the temple, and multitudes crowding to hear them.

St. Luke has perhaps disclosed a circumstance, which might lead us to think that party feelings divided the sanhedrim upon this question. He twice speaks of the high priest and his party as being Sadducees; and though we have evidence, that the Pharisees were equally, if not more enraged with Jesus, for the severity of his reproofs, they were likely to differ from the Sadducees, when the preaching of the apostles was discussed as a question of doctrine. The resurrection of Jesus was the point, which the apostles put first and foremost in all their discourses; and this was likely to exasperate the Sadducees, who, as I have already remarked, had the character of being severe in the infliction of punishments. The Pharisees, though they were glad to have the apostles punished, would not wish to see the Sadducees take the lead, nor to have the doctrine of Jesus condemned, because it supported a resurrection: and there is perhaps reason to suspect, that this division in the sanhedrim operated for a season in favour of the apostles. The high priest at this time was properly Caiaphas, who had been appointed in the year 26; but his father-in-law Annas, or Ananus, who had himself filled the office for fifteen years, and had influence enough to obtain it successively for five of his sons, appears still to have retained the power in

his own hands: and St. Luke, who wrote several years after, mentions him before Caiaphas, and by the name which he seems to have retained through life, of Annas the high priest. Two other persons are named by St. Luke, who have thus received the distinction of being handed down among the earliest opponents of the gospel. These were John and Alexander; and though it is unsafe to rest upon a mere identity of names, it has been supposed that both of them were persons of celebrity: that the former, who is here called John, was the Rabbi Jochanan ben Zaccai, the first president of the sanhedrim after the destruction of Jerusalem^a; and that Alexander was the brother of Philo Judæus, who held the office of alabarch of the Jews in Alexandria^b. It would seem that all these persons were Sadducees, and particularly active in endeavouring to silence the apostles. We know, however, that the council was not composed entirely of persons of that party; and I may conclude this lecture with the mention of a Pharisee, whose name even now is held in estimation among the Jews. This man was Gamaliel, who has been said upon authority which is entitled to some weight, to have been son of that Symeon, who took the infant Jesus in his arms, when he was presented in the temple. By his mother's side he was of the seed of David; and was grandson of Hillel, who was one of the most learned Jewish doctors of his day. He himself died eighteen years before the destruction of Jerusalem, having held the office of president of the sanhedrim for seve-

A. D.
31.

^a See Biscoe, p. 72. Light- XVIII. 6, 3. XIX. 5, 1. XX.
foot, vol. I. p. 2009. 5, 2.

^b See Josephus, Antiquit.

A. D.
31.

ral years, in which he was succeeded by his descendants for ten generations. The well known advice of Gamaliel concerning the apostles need not be repeated here; nor do I mean to question the sincerity, with which he cautioned his colleagues against incurring the danger of fighting against God: but it is not improbable, that Gamaliel and his party may have been unwilling to give the Sadducees a triumph by punishing men who maintained the doctrine of a resurrection: and thus God, who watched over his infant church, may have made the divisions of its adversaries contribute to its growth. I may have occasion to notice hereafter, what is asserted by some early writers, that Gamaliel was in his heart a Christian, and that after this period he openly avowed himself^c. At present I would only observe, that such a notion appears to be perfectly unfounded. The advice of Gamaliel certainly gave the apostles liberty for a season, and the punishment which they received was equivalent to a triumph. It was the complaint of the high priest himself, that they had filled Jerusalem with their doctrine; and multitudes came even from the cities round about, bringing with them the sick, who were miraculously cured. The Sadducees and the persecuting party were defeated for a time; but a new actor appeared soon after upon the scene, who seconded their utmost wishes, and attacked the rising sect in the manner which will be described in the following lecture.

^c For an account of Gamaliel, see Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. II. p. 44. Witsius, *Melet.*

Leidens, p. 12. Wolfius, *Biblioth. Hebr.* part. II. p. 822. et ad Act. v. 34.

LECTURE III.

FEW points have been more controverted in chronology, than the date of the conversion of St. Paul; and since it is obviously impossible to enter at present into detail in a discussion of this kind, I shall only give it as the result of careful and impartial investigation, that the ancient opinion seems most worthy of credit, which would place that memorable event within a few months from the crucifixion of our Saviour^a. That it followed closely upon the death of Stephen, would perhaps be conceded: and if the appointment of Stephen and his colleagues should seem to require a longer space of time to account for the number of believers, I would answer, that 3000 converts were made on the day of Pentecost, and 5000 are mentioned a short time after. The numbers appear to have continued increasing in this rapid ratio: and the enthusiasm, with which the wealthier converts provided support for the poorer, gave the apostles incessant occupation in dispensing this common property, in addition to their more urgent duties of preaching the gospel. It was the difficulty or impossibility of attending to both these cases, which led to the appointing of the deacons: and since this public provision for the poor began with the very first conversions, there would have been nothing surprising, if St. Luke had in-

A. D.
31.

^a Such is the opinion of Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. I. p. 1. Baronius, Labbé, Genebrard, Usher, Calvisius, Petavius, &c.

A. D. 31. formed us, that the deacons were appointed immediately after the day of Pentecost. This however is not the case; but there is nothing in his narrative which contradicts the notion, that they were appointed within a few months^b; and there are reasons which would induce me to think that they were chosen about the feast of Tabernacles.

If we take the year 31 for the date of the crucifixion, the feast of Pentecost fell about the month of June. The release of the apostles after the advice given by Gamaliel may well have happened in the course of the following month: and I shall say little more of the internal condition of the church, except that the believers met together for prayer and for breaking of bread: which last phrase has always been taken to mean, that a certain time was fixed for a common meal, at the end of which the body and blood of Christ were symbolically received in the bread and wine. It also appears, that beside the public instruction which was given by the apostles in the temple, they were in the habit of meeting in private houses; or, as the expression is perhaps to be interpreted, there were rooms in different quarters of the city expressly set apart for these meetings^c.

In the mean time we cannot suppose, that the persecuting party in the sanhedrim would abandon the design of suppressing the rising sect. Hitherto they had been foiled by men, whom they described as unlearned and ignorant: the apostles were so popular with the multitude, that another apprehension

^b It is said to have happened in the first year after the ascension by Natalis Alexander, (Sæc.

I. Synops, c. 6.)

^c See Mosheim, *de rebus ante Const.* Cent. I. c. 37. not. ^u.

of them might have endangered their own lives ; and the high priest and his party, who were Sadducees, might feel mortified, that advice given by a Pharisee, had in fact delivered the apostles out of their hands. Other and more effectual measures were to be taken. The resurrection of the dead was too delicate a point to be made the ground of objection to the apostles' doctrine. It was well known, that the mass of the people took part with the Pharisees upon this question ; and unless the people could be brought to join in the opposition, there was no chance of any measures of severity being undertaken with success. A new scheme was therefore devised, which was likely to rouse the religious feelings of all true Israelites : and the approaching feast of Tabernacles would furnish an opportunity for putting this scheme into practice.

The feast of Tabernacles, which took place in the month of September, may also be considered the cause of an important arrangement in the affairs of the Christians. We are told, that the appointment of the deacons was owing to *a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration*. The persons, who are here called *Hebrews*, were the native inhabitants of Jerusalem ; and the *Grecians* were those foreign Jews, who since the captivity had lived in great numbers in different countries, and generally spoke Greek as the prevailing language. We learn from this passage, that many of these foreign Jews had embraced the gospel ; and they had either heard of it now for the first time upon coming to the feast ; or, which is not improbable,

A. D.
31.

many of them may have been converted at the feast of Pentecost, and living at no great distance in Syria or Judæa, they may have come up again to worship in the temple, and to see the apostles. Many of these foreign Jews were of the poorer sort : and the apostles, who were at this time particularly engaged in instructing the new converts, had also their other labour increased of distributing the public money to so many new claimants. They therefore determined to free themselves from this latter office, and commit it to other hands ; by which means they would be able to devote the whole of their own time to preaching and instruction. As in the case of the election of Matthias, they called upon the believers in general to name fit persons to discharge this office ; and seven men were accordingly commissioned by the apostles to distribute the public money. From this peculiar branch of their ministry they were called *διάκονοι*, or deacons ; and the name continued ever after to denote the first or lowest office in the church. We must not however suppose, that this was the only duty which the deacons fulfilled. Before their appointment, they are described as being *full of the Holy Ghost and of wisdom* : the first of which expressions was applied to those persons, who gave visible proofs of possessing the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost ; and *wisdom* was a term, which implied a preternatural ability in preaching the word of God. We may suppose therefore, that the seven deacons had distinguished themselves before in assisting the apostles to instruct the converts. We know from what follows, that they worked miracles, defended the gospel in public discussions, and admin-

istered baptism^d. All these things were perhaps done by them before their appointment. The baptizing so many thousand persons could not have been performed by the apostles only. The actual distribution of the money must also have employed several other persons; and we can hardly conceive, that the apostles did not from the first single out some zealous disciples, who might assist them in their various duties. When Ananias and Sapphira died, we read of persons being immediately at hand to take them to their burial: and Mosheim may perhaps be right in thinking, that these *young men*, as they are called, were not present accidentally, but that it was their business to attend upon the apostles, and execute any commission^e. It is reasonable to conclude, that the seven deacons were young men such as these; though if it be true, as some early writers^f have asserted, that they had been of the number of the seventy disciples, we might suppose that they were at least of the same age as the youngest of the apostles. The names of two of these persons, Stephen and Philip, will soon call for more particular notice. The five others are not named again in the New Testament, nor is any thing authentic known concerning their history^g: though we shall have occasion to consider hereafter, whether Nicolas, who was a proselyte of Antioch, was the person who gave a name to the sect of the Nicolaitans.

A. D.
31.

^d See Zeigler *de Diaconis et diaconissis*, c. 19. p. 347. Bingham, *Orig. Eccl.* II. 20.

^e De rebus ante Const. cent. I. c. 37. not. ^s. c. 37. not. ^w.

^f Epiphanius, *Hær.* XX. 4.

p. 50. See Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. I. p. 730.

^g For the traditions concerning them, see Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. II. p. 124.

A. D.
31.

The relief, which the apostles felt in having this trouble taken off their hands, seems to have shewn itself immediately in the increasing number of converts. We now meet with the extraordinary fact, that a great multitude of the priests embraced the gospel; and the feast of Tabernacles, which I have supposed to be at hand, would be likely to bring many new converts among the foreign Jews. The presence of one of the great festivals is also indicated by what we read of Stephen disputing with persons belonging to the synagogues of Cyrene, Alexandria, Cilicia, and Asia Minor. We are told, that there were as many as 480 synagogues in Jerusalem^h: and it seems highly probable, that many of them were built by foreign Jews, who thus had synagogues of their own, to which they could resort, when they attended the public festivals. Some of these persons now heard for the first time of a new sect, which was making a surprising progress in Jerusalem: and we may perhaps infer, that the chief priests had been waiting for their arrival, in the hopes of engaging them in their scheme against the Christians. There were now several persons beside the apostles who were active in preaching the gospel; and though the synagogues were crowded by this influx of foreign Jews, they entered them boldly, and defended their doctrines. We read particularly of Stephen being engaged in these discussions: and as far as words were concerned, his victory was easy; for prejudice and error were against him, but truth and sincerity were on his side. It was then, that the new method of attack was put in execution: and false witnesses were hired, who accused him to the

^h Biscoe, p. 94. Lightfoot, vol. I. p. 363.

council of *speaking blasphemous words against Moses and against God*; and of saying that *Jesus of Nazareth should destroy that place, and change the customs which Moses had delivered*. We can hardly suppose, that even the apostles were aware at this time, that the gospel was to supplant the religion of Moses: still less could we imagine, that Stephen would have spoken blasphemously of Moses or of God. But while he was enforcing the indispensable necessity of faith in Christ's death, he may have given offence to many Jews, who thought that as followers of the law, they could not be excluded from salvation. He would also be sure to represent Moses as inferior to Jesus; and to those who knew the latter only as a crucified Galilæan, the assertion would be looked upon as little less than blasphemy. When the chief priests represented the doctrine of the apostles as subversive of the Law, they struck upon a chord which vibrated to the heart of every Israelite. The Pharisees would even have been more forward than the Sadducees to resent an insult such as this: and the high priest and his followers could not have devised a plan more likely to unite all parties against the Christians: nor could there have been a fitter time for spreading this new calumny, than when persons were entering Jerusalem every day, who had as yet heard nothing of the rising sect. If some Jewish accounts may be believed, Gamaliel himself was no longer the advocate of cautious measures. It is possible, that as a rigid Pharisee, and even upon his own principle, he may have looked upon it as a proof that *the counsel of the apostles was not of God*, since they blasphemed Moses and the Law. According to the same au-

A. D.
31.

A. D. 31. thority he composed a prayer, which implored the extermination of these hereticsⁱ. The same is said of a zealous disciple of his, named Samuel: and perhaps some credit may be attached to these traditions, when we know, that Saul, who carried the persecution to its height, was a disciple of Gamaliel.

Saul was at this time in the vigour of his life: and it has been supposed upon good grounds, that he was born about the same year with our Saviour^k. His own express testimony fixes his birth at Tarsus in Cilicia, which effectually disproves the tradition preserved by Jerom^l, that he was born at Giscala in Judæa, from which place his parents removed to Tarsus, when Judæa was overrun by the Roman armies. Tarsus, the capital of Cilicia, which in the time of Xenophon was a large and flourishing city, is spoken of in terms of equal commendation by Josephus. As a place of learning, it had the character of rivalling Athens and Alexandria^m; and having fortunately taken part with Cæsar in the civil war, it was rewarded by the victorious party with political privileges. The inhabitants had freedom conferred upon them by Antony, and other rights were extended to them by Augustusⁿ. Hence the pa-

ⁱ See Witsius, as quoted at p. 60.

^k Tillemont makes him to have been born two years earlier. But there is no authority for this, except a spurious treatise, ascribed to Chrysostom, which says that St. Paul was sixty-eight years of age at the time of his death. St. Luke calls him *νεανίας* (Acts vii. 58.) and Clement of Alexandria

speaks of him as *ἀκμάσας* at the time of our Saviour's ascension. (Strom. IV. p. 625.) Clement probably conceived his conversion to follow shortly after the ascension; and if he was then a little more than thirty, he would have been called *ἀκμάσας*.

^l In Philemon. 23.

^m Strabo XIV. p. 673.

ⁿ See Dio Cass. XLVII. p.

rents of Saul, and he himself in right of his birth, were citizens of Rome. He was of the tribe of Benjamin, and according to his own expression, of the purest Jewish extraction^o. His family was perhaps above the common rank; at least the fact of his working at a trade is no proof to the contrary: for it has been shewn, that for a child not to have learnt some method of maintaining himself was reckoned a disgrace^p; and his general education was learned and attended with expense. Notwithstanding what I have said, upon the authority of Strabo, of Tarsus being so celebrated as a seat of learning, it is added by the same writer, that most of the inhabitants, after laying the foundation of their acquirements in their native city, travelled abroad to finish their education. This was certainly the case with Saul. His acquaintance with profane literature was perhaps acquired before he quitted Tarsus: but he completed his studies at Jerusalem; and being inclined to the sect of the Pharisees, he had the advantage of being instructed by Gamaliel, the most celebrated teacher of his day. I have mentioned Samuel, as another zealous disciple of Gamaliel; and I have also stated that Barnabas is said to have studied in the same school with Saul. The latter however speaks of himself as having surpassed many of his contemporaries in Jewish learning, and as being preeminently attached to the traditions of the Fathers. This was the distinguishing mark of the Pharisees: and though with many of them it was a cloak for violations of the written law, there

342. Appian. *Bel. Civ.* IV. p.^o Phil. iii. 5.320. Dio Chrys. *Or.* XXXIV. p. 415.^p See Witsius, *l. c.* I. 12. p. 12.

A. D.
31.

never has been any evidence adduced, that this was the case with Saul. He appears to have been sincere, where many were hypocrites, and strict where many were self-indulgent. Some of the Fathers have discussed the question, whether he was married^q; and if the affirmative could be proved, his marriage must be assumed to have taken place before his conversion: but there seems no doubt, that the notion of his having a wife arose from some mistaken passages in his Epistles^r, and has no foundation whatever in truth. If he was of the same age as our Saviour, he must have passed some years, after quitting the school of Gamaliel, of which we know nothing. There are passages in his own writings which seem to shew, that he had never seen Jesus while he was on earth^s; and on the whole I should conclude, that he came to Jerusalem for the feast of Tabernacles about the time of the appointment of the seven deacons. When St. Luke mentions the synagogues, in which Stephen disputed, he names one belonging to the Cilicians: and it is not improbable, that Saul may have taken part in these discussions. Being *unable*, as St. Luke adds, *to resist the wisdom and spirit with which Stephen spoke*, he would eagerly catch at the charge which was now brought against him of speaking against the Temple and the Law. Saul may have been one of those, who brought Stephen before the council: and the chief priests had now accomplished their great object of raising a popular feeling against the new doctrine. The council would soon assemble: care would be taken, that a sufficient number of persons should be present to approve of

^q See Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. I. p. 797.

^r 1 Cor. ix. 5. Phil. iv. 3.

^s Heb. ii. 3. Acts xiii. 31.

any severity: and Saul perhaps now offered his services to the high priests, and brought a party of Cilicians to attend the trial. Stephen was heard, while he went through the Jewish history from Abraham to Solomon, though his object was to prove, that their ancestors had always shewn the same blindness and obstinacy as in the recent case of Jesus Christ: but he was not suffered to proceed to this conclusion: it was perhaps agreed beforehand, that as soon as he came to speak of the crucifixion of Jesus, he should be interrupted, and sentence should be passed. Even the form of a trial does not seem to have been observed: the chief priests knew that they were safe in the approbation of the by-standers; and we have the evidence of Saul himself, that his vote was given for the death of Stephen^t. This perhaps means, that he was one of those who shouted acclamation, when the chief priest delivered the sentence. No time was lost in carrying it into execution. Stephen was hurried from the temple where the council sat, to some place without the walls: and before even the news of what had been done could be generally known, the work of murder had begun. The first stones, as was always the case, were thrown by the witnesses, who had been hired to accuse Stephen of blasphemy: and that they might do their work more effectually, they took off their looser garments and committed them to the care of Saul. I have supposed Saul to have been an actor in the whole of this iniquitous scene; and he had now the satisfaction of seeing the blood of him, whose arguments he had been un-

A. D.
31.^t Acts xxii. 20.

A. D. 31. able to answer, and whom he believed in the sincerity of his heart to be a blasphemer of Moses and of God.

The services of such a zealous agent as Saul were not to be neglected by the chief priests. We may perhaps infer that Gamaliel himself did not now oppose the ardor of his former pupil : and the watchword of the Temple and the Law being in danger was sufficient to raise a ferment from one end of Jerusalem to the other. Many believers, who had never viewed the matter in this light, might perhaps begin to doubt of their newly adopted faith : the suspicions of those, who had doubted or wavered before, would be strengthened : and in the mean time both Pharisees and Sadducees were active in prejudicing the new comers against the Christians. The success of the attempt against Stephen shewed the policy of attacking the leaders of the party. The places where they assembled would be easily discovered : and the panic, which attends any great popular movement, would cause many of the believers to hide themselves from the storm. Saul and his party succeeded in laying hold of some who were less cautious ; and they either lodged them in the prisons, or bringing them into the synagogues, which were sure to be filled with the foreign Jews, they ordered them to abjure their doctrines on pain of instant punishment. This scene of violence began immediately after the death of Stephen. It was perhaps prudent, that his murderers should not wait till a greater crowd had assembled : and the mangled remains of the first martyr were left to be removed by the friends who had been bold enough to attend. His funeral seems to

have been performed with some publicity^u: but though a few Christians might meet in safety for such a purpose without the walls, they would find a most formidable change in public opinion when they returned to the city. The necessity of yielding to circumstances was apparent. It was decided that the Apostles should remain in Jerusalem, and endeavour, if they could, to protect their converts: but that the deacons, and the others who had taken a prominent part in public discussions, should leave the city. Nicolas, one of the deacons, was a native of Antioch: Philip appears to have resided at Cæsarea: some of those who fled with them belonged to Cyprus and Cyrene: so that if many of them returned to their homes, the persecution was in fact the cause of the gospel being more widely spread. We shall see presently, that it was carried by some of these persons as far as Phenicia, Antioch, and Cyprus: but the immediate result was the conversion of several persons in the nearer places of Judæa and Samaria.

I have said, that of the first converts, who were made on the day of Pentecost, many, when they returned from the feast, would carry back their new opinions into their own countries. We have also seen, that multitudes had come from the neighbouring towns, and brought their sick to be cured by the Apostles. The gospel therefore had already produced a considerable sensation beyond Jerusa-

^u The story is worthy of little attention, that the body of Stephen continued a day and a night without interment; during which time it was not touched by any animal, and that at length Gamaliel was instrumental in having it buried in his own ground, eight leagues from Jerusalem. See Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. II. p. 13.

A. D. 31. lem: but this was the first time, that any persons holding an office in the church, and regularly commissioned to preach and baptize, had gone with such an object to any of the neighbouring towns. Philip, one of the deacons, now took the direction of Samaria: and we may observe, that this was the beginning of the completion of those remarkable words which our Saviour delivered before his ascension. He then said, that the gospel was to be preached *in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria*. I need not dwell upon the hatred which existed between the Jews and Samaritans: and there can be little doubt, that the Jews considered the Samaritans to be excluded from the promises, which were given only to themselves. We know however, that the expectation of a Messiah was as prevalent in Samaria as in Judæa. It might be doubted, perhaps, whether there was not a greater mixture of ancient Jewish blood in the inhabitants of Samaria, than is generally supposed. Their language retained more of the original Hebrew; and they had preserved the old uncouth Hebrew characters, while their neighbours in Judæa had adopted the more elegant form of Chaldee letters from Babylon *. The two countries had now for some years been under the same government. Herod the Great obtained Samaria from Augustus after the battle of Actium, and rebuilt the capital, which was called by him Sebaste in honour of the emperor, with great magnificence. When Herod's dominions were divided at his death, Samaria as well as Judæa was the portion of Arche-

* Concerning the Samaritans I would refer to Brucker, *Hebr.* vol. II. p. 434. Carpzovius, *Crit. Sacr.* V. T. part. vol. II. p. 661. Wolfius, *Bibl.* II. c. 4. p. 585.

laus: and at the time which we are now considering, the two countries were still united under the government of Pontius Pilate. A. D.
31.

The name of the city in Samaria, in which Philip preached, is not mentioned: but his arrival there had been anticipated by an extraordinary man, who obtained great popularity, not only in Samaria, but, if we may believe the ecclesiastical writers, over a large part of the world. This man was Simon Magus: in noticing whose history it is extremely difficult to separate truth from fiction: but the most authentic facts, which we know of him, being recorded by St. Luke, and connected with the earliest propagation of the gospel, it is impossible not to take some notice of him in this place.

Justin Martyr, who was himself a Samaritan, informs us that Simon was a native of Gittum, a village in that country^y. Of his education we know nothing for certain: but in a work, which although spurious is of considerable antiquity, it is said that he studied at Alexandria, and was well versed in Grecian literature, as well as being a proficient in oratory and dialectics^z. That he studied at Alexandria, is not improbable: and he would have learnt in that city, what he seems undoubtedly to have professed, the doctrine of the Gnostics. The name of Gnosticism was perhaps not yet given to any particular sect of philosophers. But as is generally the case in the progress of opinions, the thing existed, and had advanced a considerable way, before it assumed a distinctive name. Philosophy had long been verging towards an eclectic character in Alexandria. There had in fact never been an exclusive

^y Apol. I. 26. p. 59.

^z Clement. Hom. II. 22.

A. D.
31.

school predominant in that city: and though the Platonic philosophy was perhaps the most popular, it received some important modifications from two different quarters. The Jews had been settled in Alexandria in considerable numbers from the foundation of the city. Their language soon became Greek, and many of them had an extensive acquaintance with heathen literature. This produced an important effect upon the philosophy of one party and the religion of the other. The Platonists studied the Jewish scriptures, and saw in them traces of a pure and sublime theology. The Jews, who wished to remove the prejudices against their peculiar creed, endeavoured in an evil hour to shew that it harmonized with many of the speculations of Plato. They even asserted, that Plato had borrowed from the writings of Moses: a statement, which, though certainly void of any just foundation, was implicitly believed by many of the Fathers^a. The Platonists met this charge by referring to writings much older than the time of Plato, and, as they contended, prior also to Moses. This was, I believe, the origin of many of the forgeries, which under the names of Orpheus, Musæus, and other poets of the heroic ages, may be traced to Alexandria as their source. The intercourse with the Jews will also account for many expressions in the spurious oracles, which were ascribed to the Sibyls and the Magi, and which were probably written with a view to conciliate the creeds of Moses and of Plato. The Alexandrian Jews were not only the corrupters of their religion from heathen sources: but their doctrines, as they explained them to the Grecian

^a I may refer to my Bampton Lectures, note 87.

philosophers, were already debased with a considerable alloy from Babylon and Persia. The conquests of Alexander, and the communication between Egypt and the East, which flowed from them, were another means of introducing the Persian doctrines into Alexandria: and thus from these three sources, the philosophy of Plato, the religion of Moses, and the theology of the Magi, a new and heterogeneous system sprang up, which led to the ill-digested but not irrational eclectic philosophy on the one hand, and to the ravings of Gnosticism on the other. The most fertile topic of discussion was the origin of Matter and of Evil: and the attempts to account for evil, without making God the author of it, have perhaps been productive of more error and absurdity than all the other speculations of human reason.

That Matter was independent of the Deity, and coeternal with him, was a fundamental tenet of Platonism: nor did the Alexandrian Jews find any repugnance to extract this from the writings of Moses. That several orders of spiritual beings were interposed between God and the human race, was maintained alike by both parties; the demons of the one being identified with the angels of the other. The Jews had also admitted many innovations in their belief concerning angels from their residence in Babylon. The Oriental notion was, that several successive emanations of spiritual beings had proceeded from God: and the theory of emanations became the favourite tenet of the Gnostics, and their grand invention for accounting for the origin of Evil. They supposed the Deity, by acting upon his own mind, to have produced the first pair of beings whom they called *Æons*; and these, by suc-

A. D. cessive emanations, gave birth to other beings, which
31. gradually deteriorated and had less resemblance to
the great first Cause. One of these later emanations
passed the boundaries of the Pleroma, which was the
abode of the Deity, and there coming in contact with
Matter created the world. According to this scheme
the great first Cause had nothing to do with creation,
nor was even aware of its having taken place. The
evil, which appeared in the world, was inherent in
Matter itself; and the Deity was constantly em-
ployed in attempting to remedy it. We may re-
cognise in this scheme the doctrine of two Prin-
ciples, which was held so generally in Persia, and
was afterwards more widely diffused in the west by
Manes or Manichæus. Some of the Gnostics be-
lieved the world to have been created by the evil
principle: but the creator was supposed by all of
them to have more or less connexion with evil; and
the boast of Gnosticism was to free mankind from
the tyranny of this being, and to restore the *know-
ledge* of the true God.

Such, as far as we can penetrate this obscure sub-
ject, was the state of one branch of philosophy, which
Simon Magus would meet with, if he studied in the
schools of Alexandria. We can trace another con-
nexion with that system in the pretensions which
he made to preternatural power: and the Gnostics
have always been represented as dealing in magic.
That Simon appeared at least to work miracles, can-
not be doubted. He had attracted attention in Sa-
maria some time before Philip arrived there; and
all the people looked up to him as an extraordinary
being. His history, as I have observed, is so mixed
with fable, that it is difficult to say, whether it con-

tains any foundation of truth. There is, however, some evidence, that Simon was not the first person, who introduced his peculiar notions into Samaria. The name of Dositheus has been mentioned, as having preceded him; and Dositheus has been connected with the history of John the Baptist^b. We may perhaps be right in collecting from these accounts, that the preaching of John the Baptist made a great sensation in Samaria: and that coupled with the national expectation of the Messiah, it led to more than one impostor pretending to be the person announced by John the Baptist. The Jews or Samaritans, who embraced Gnosticism, would couple this expectation with their peculiar doctrines. They would give out that the person, who was to come, would free the world from the corruption of matter and the tyranny of the evil principle, and once more restore the knowledgé of the true God. Whether Dositheus, if such a person existed, or Simon Magus, proclaimed themselves as this long expected person, may perhaps be doubted. It is certain, that Simon *gave out that himself was some great one*, and that his general title was *the great power of God*. Soon after he had established this character, Philip the deacon appeared in the same town, working much more stupendous miracles, and announcing a teacher sent from God, who would free mankind from the tyranny of sin. The delivery of such a doctrine at this time was critical, and could not fail to make a great impression upon the mind of Simon. Though he was an impostor as to his miracles, he may have been sincere in his philosophy; and Philip certainly appeared to realize the expectations, which Simon

A. D.
31.^b Bampton Lectures, note 40.

A. D. 31. had been teaching the whole Samaritan nation to entertain. It need not lower the opinion, which we form of the gospel, if we suppose its reception to have been promoted in this instance by a philosophy, which was in a great measure false. The reality and overwhelming character of Philip's miracles are in fact greatly confirmed by what took place in Samaria : and the baptism of Simon was a remarkable instance of the testimony which error pays to truth.

There are reasons, which seem to shew, that the conversions in Samaria occupied a very short portion of time : and if we think of the previous impression, which Simon had produced, and of the stupendous works with which Philip confirmed his own superior pretensions, we need not be surprised at the whole population professing so rapidly their faith in Christ. The news of such unexpected success would be beyond measure consoling to the Apostles in Jerusalem. Philip would not fail to acquaint them with the joyful fact of his flight having contributed to the extension of the gospel : and he would perhaps be perplexed at being left to himself with the sole superintendence of so many converts. The Apostles had continued at Jerusalem in the hour of trial : and had they then left it, their departure might have been fatal to their suffering cause : but as soon as they heard of the conversions in Samaria, they felt that the presence of some of their body was as much wanted there as in Jerusalem. Peter and John, two of the most distinguished of them, immediately went down : and their presence could not fail to produce a still stronger impression of preternatural power. Though Philip worked miracles himself, he was not able to communicate the same power to

others. His baptism conferred the ordinary, sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit, but not any of the visible and extraordinary gifts. It appears from many passages of the New Testament, that the power of communicating these gifts was possessed exclusively by the apostles : and if any of Philip's converts had begun to entertain doubts as to their faith, they had now the evidence of feeling themselves invested with superhuman power. This was the effect of Peter and John merely laying their hands upon them and praying : and no stronger evidence could be borne to the reality of these miracles, than by the fact of Simon offering money, that he might possess the power of conferring these miraculous gifts. This offer, which has coupled the name of Simon with such disgraceful recollections, shewed too fully the imperfect nature of his faith. He had believed in Jesus Christ as an emanation from God, but he had built that belief upon his own false and superstitious philosophy. How far his countrymen partook of that fatal delusion, we are not informed. Justin Martyr speaks of all Samaria looking up to him as a God : and the Fathers are unanimous in naming him as the founder of the Gnostic heresies. If we understand by this, that he was the first Gnostic, who introduced the name of Christ into that absurd system, we may perhaps admit the assertion as true : and we have seen, that he heard of the name of Christ very early in the establishment of the gospel. After this interview with the apostles, he probably made use of the name of Jesus in his magical delusions : and when he explained his doctrine of emanations, he gave to Jesus Christ the part of that divine Being, who was to free mankind from the

A. D.
31.

A. D. 31. evil principle, and reveal the knowledge of the true God. Thus his system contained a foundation of truth under a multifarious mass of error: and there is reason to think that the name of Christ was introduced by him and his followers into many places, before it was announced by an apostle. We shall have occasion to consider hereafter the visit of Simon Magus to Rome: I shall not now pursue his history any further, having only observed, that he probably left Samaria for the present, and endeavoured to remove himself as far as possible from the preachers of Christianity^c.

The apostles, having thus confirmed the Samaritans in the truth, as well as freed them from delusion, returned to Jerusalem; and we read of their preaching the gospel in many villages through which they passed. Before I consider the state, in which they found the church at Jerusalem, I shall finish this part of the history of Philip, who had been the means of converting Samaria. I have supposed him to have escaped from Jerusalem a little before or during the feast of Tabernacles; and the feast lasted eight days. A journey of not many hours would bring him into Samaria: and I have observed, that the peculiar circumstances preceding and attending his preaching would make a short time necessary for the success which he met with. The next transaction, in which he was engaged, proves that the feast of Tabernacles was now over. He went in consequence of a vision on the road to Gaza, and he there met with an Ethiopian eunuch, who, it is said, *had*

^c He perhaps travelled in many countries: but his visit to Tyre is marked by what we read of his mistress Helena. Iren. I. 23. 2. p. 99. Tertull. *de anima*, 34. p. 290.

gone up to Jerusalem to worship, and was now returning. The country here called Ethiopia was probably Abyssinia: and having performed so long a journey, he may have protracted his stay somewhat beyond the time taken up by the festival. This would make it perfectly practicable for Philip to have left Jerusalem at the beginning of the feast of Tabernacles; to have preached with success in Samaria; and then to have met the Ethiopian eunuch, who was returning home after the festival. This meeting, as I have stated, was the result of a vision: and curiosity may perhaps enquire, why the conversion of this one man was made the subject of a preternatural communication. If the tradition could be established, which is preserved by Eusebius^d, and which is still prevalent in Abyssinia, we might perceive a sufficient reason for this special interference: for it has been asserted, that this eunuch, who was a great person in the Ethiopian court, and presided over the treasury, was the means of introducing Christianity into his own country upon his return. We are told however by persons, who have investigated this matter, that there are no grounds for such a supposition; and that Christianity was not introduced into that country till the fourth century^e. It might also be conjectured, that since eunuchs were forbidden to enter into the congregation of the Lord^f, but Isaiah had prophesied that in the times of the gospel they should have *a place and a name there better than of sons and of daughters*^g,

A. D.
31.

^d Eus. *H. E.* II. 1. Cyril. Hieros. Cateches. XVII. 25. p. 276. See Fromondus in Act. p. 618.

^e See Ludolf. *Hist. Æthiop.* III. 2.

^f Deut. XXIII. 1—3.

^g Isai. LVI. 3—8.

A. D. 31. the baptism of this eunuch may have been intended to remove one more prejudice from the exclusive notions of the Jews. The admission of their old enemies the Samaritans to the new dispensation was a great step gained: and it is possible, that the baptism of the eunuch may for this reason have been provided for by a special revelation. However this may be, it is important to remark, that the Ethiopian eunuch was probably a Jew, or at least a proselyte. This might be inferred from his having gone to worship at Jerusalem, and being engaged in reading the prophecies of Isaiah: but it seems almost demonstrable, that no admission of a Gentile convert had taken place before the baptism of Cornelius. Philip would never have ventured to take a step, which even Peter afterwards would not have taken without a command from heaven: and if he had now baptized a Gentile, the question would not have been considered a new one, nor have excited so much sensation in the case of Cornelius. I conclude therefore that the Ethiopian eunuch was a Jew^h, who had risen to a high station in the court of Candace: and though St. Luke relates but a small part of the conversation between him and Philip, we gather from it the important fact, that the profession of faith required at baptism, was belief in Jesus Christ as the Son of God.

The success of Philip's preaching was not confined to the conversion of the eunuch: and perhaps indeed this was a small part of the benefit intended, when he was sent on this journey. He disappeared suddenly and miraculously from the eunuch: and these repeated interpositions of divine power were

^h See Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. II. p. 361.

perhaps made to strengthen his faith, and to assure him of assistance from above. The place, to which he found himself transported, was Azotus or Ashdod on the coast of the Mediterranean: and from thence to Cæsarea he preached the gospel and made converts in the towns and places through which he passed. Cæsarea appears to have been his usual place of residence^t, and he probably continued to live there: so that this important city, which might be called the Roman capital of the province, and was the Procurator's general abode, had now the advantage of hearing the gospel from this zealous and successful preacher. We have thus seen the gospel circulated in the northern part of Judæa, in several places of Samaria, and along the whole extent of the coast from Azotus to Cæsarea: and all this was immediately owing to the very measures, which had been taken by the enemies of the gospel to suppress and exterminate it. It is time, however, that we should now return to consider the continuance of these cruel measures, and the state of the believers in Jerusalem, whom we left in the midst of such great sufferings and danger.

The prudence, which dictated the retirement of the deacons, was perhaps followed by the Christians ceasing to hold their public meetings: and if they continued to attend regularly in the temple, and to conform to all the outward ceremonies of the Law, it might be difficult for Saul and his party to have detected them. We may perhaps conclude, that the leaders of the new sect were the principal objects of persecution; and there must still have been thousands of believers in Jerusalem, who escaped the

A. D.
31.

^t This is said by Isidor. Pleus. I. ep. 449. p. 114.

A. D. 31.

danger. Saul however was not satisfied with having thus silenced them for a while in the capital. When the festival was ended, it was probably his plan to return to Tarsus; and he considered whether on his journey he might not do some further injury to the Christians. The large and populous city of Damascus did not lie much out of his road; and it is highly probable that he had been in the habit of visiting it in his journeys from Tarsus to Jerusalem. It is known at this time to have contained a vast number of Jews. A few years later, in the reign of Nero, as many as 10,000 were killed in a quarrel with the other inhabitants^k: which shews to what a great extent they had settled and multiplied there. It is plain also, that at this time the gospel was spreading at Damascus. It might have been carried thither by some Jews who returned from the last feast of Pentecost: and others, who went up to the feast of Tabernacles, might have informed the high priest of the progress of the new sect. Saul now volunteered his services to endeavour to check it, and even offered to return to Jerusalem with any of these heretics whom he might find at Damascus. The high priest readily gave him letters to the synagogues of that city; and these would invest him with power over the inhabitants who were Jews. The political state of Damascus at this time may also have pointed it out as a likely place for such acts of violence to be committed with impunity.

Damascus had come into the possession of the Romans when Tigranes was conquered by Pompey; but there is reason to think, that at this time it was held by Aretas, the petty sovereign of Arabia Pe-

^k Joseph. *de Bel. Jud.* II. 26.

træa. We know, that this was the case three years afterwards : and the war between Aretas and Herod Antipas, which probably put him in possession of this city, must have broken out some time before. Herod, as we know from the evangelists, had formed an incestuous connexion with the wife of his brother Philip. His own wife was the daughter of Aretas : and as soon as she discovered the insult which was offered her, she took refuge with her father. Aretas made war upon his son-in-law, and totally defeated him in a decisive engagement¹; and though this victory is generally placed several years later, it seems more natural to think, that Aretas resented the affront soon after it had happened : and when Josephus says, that the defeat of Herod was considered to be a punishment for his unjust execution of John the Baptist, he might lead us to infer that the one event followed shortly upon the other. I conclude therefore, that Aretas gained his victory before the crucifixion of our Saviour : and it is probable, that the occupation of Damascus was one of the consequences of his success. If this were so, it was his obvious policy to pay court to the Jews. Beside their importance from their great numbers within the city, they might be likely to feel an interest in the cause of Herod, who was in some respects their countryman ; or Herod might at least wish to engage them on his side : and Aretas, who knew that Herod was not popular, might think that by judicious conciliation he might hinder the Jews from giving him this advantage. All this would not be unknown to Saul, who therefore looked forward to receiving no molestation from the local au-

¹ Joseph. *Antiq.* XVIII. 5.

A. D. 31. thorities of Damascus in his proceedings against the Christians: and if he wanted companions or assistants, he would find them in his countrymen of Cilicia, who were returning like himself from Jerusalem.

It is not my intention to detail the extraordinary history of the conversion of Saul, except so far as any circumstances of it may illustrate the progress of the gospel. I have observed, and the history itself makes it evident, that there were at this time several believers in Damascus. I have also said, that this fact might be made known in Jerusalem by the Jews who went up to the feast of Tabernacles: and it would seem that some of these persons had returned to Damascus before Saul arrived there; at least the part which Saul had taken in the persecution was already known to Ananias, and his arrival with the commission from the high priest was expected. I have sometimes been inclined to think, that Ananias was one of the numerous converts who had been made at the preceding Pentecost^m. That he was a believer in the gospel, cannot be doubted. He is not only called *a disciple*, but it was by his hands that Saul was baptized: and I can hardly think, that at this time any persons administered baptism, except those who had received their own commission from the apostles. St. Luke's narrative of Saul's residence in Damascus is evidently imperfect; and we may account for this by supposing, that he was one of those who left Jerusalem during the persecution, and retired to his native city Antioch. It appears, however, from Saul's own

^m The Greek martyrologies state him to have been one of the seventy disciples, and afterwards martyred.

A. D.
31.

words, that at this time he did not stay long in Damascus. He had as yet many things to learn. The whole doctrine of remission of sins through Christ's death was new to him: and so far from being at present fit for the office of an apostle, the humblest disciple in Damascus was his superior in knowledge. If the conversion of Saul had been an ordinary occurrence, his obvious course was to have staid in Damascus, till he was more fully instructed in his new faith. Ananias was at hand, who would have opened the eyes of his mind, as he had restored him to his bodily sight: or he might at once have returned to Jerusalem, and obtained instruction from the apostles, whose lives he had so lately sought. But it is plain, that there was an higher Power controlling all his actions. He had to learn the first elements of the gospel, but it pleased God to reveal them to him by special illuminations. It was doubtless under this guidance that he now withdrew into Arabia; a step, which was perhaps necessary on account of the odium which attached to his name; and it was in this period of solitude and privacy, that his mind went through that moral and intellectual training, which was to fit him for his high calling. It has been disputed, whether St. Paul preached the gospel while he was in Arabia; and it is rash to pronounce upon questions, which present such little evidence: but I cannot help thinking it most probable, that the commencement of his apostolic ministry is not to be dated so early. He was now preparing himself for his future labours: and if the opportunity occurred, he would doubtless endeavour to extend the same blessing to others, which he had lately received himself: but I should certainly ima-

A. D.
31.

gine, that he was not now a preacher of the gospel in the proper sense of that expression. The term also of his residence in Arabia has led to discussion. In the third year from his conversion he was at Jerusalemⁿ, and for some time previous he had been at Damascus; but whether the greater part of this interval was spent in Damascus or Arabia, it is difficult to determine. From the surprise which his presence caused at Jerusalem, I should infer, that he could not have been long at Damascus, where he certainly preached the gospel, or the sincerity of his conversion would have been more generally known. I should therefore conclude, that his first visit to Damascus was a very short one; that he went into Arabia before the winter of 31; that he passed the whole of the following year in seclusion there; and that early in 33 he returned to Damascus^o. Whether these conclusions be correct or no, it is consoling to think, that since the departure of Saul from Jerusalem, the Christians in that city were comparatively at rest. The ferment, which had been raised by the influx of strangers at the feast of Tabernacles, would subside with their removal; and the chief priests had lost their most active coadjutor in Saul. The state of the church at Jerusalem during the period of his retirement in Arabia, will be considered at the beginning of the following Lecture.

ⁿ Gal. i. 18.

^o This is the opinion of Lud. Cappellus. *Hist. Apost.* p. 8, 9.

Benson I. 7. p. 188: 9. p. 202. but opposed by Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. I. p. 520, 798.



LECTURE IV.

I PROPOSED to consider in the present Lecture the state of the church at Jerusalem after the departure of Saul. Whether Saul set out for Damascus before Peter and John went into Samaria, is not certain. That the conversions were going on in Samaria by the preaching of Philip, while Saul was continuing his persecutions in Jerusalem. can hardly be doubted: but perhaps Saul had commenced his journey, before Peter and John left the city. The two apostles need not have been long in completing the work, which Philip had begun so prosperously: but we have seen, that as they were returning, they preached the gospel in many places, through which they passed: and perhaps they knew, that the departure of Saul and of the foreign Jews made it less urgent for them to join their colleagues in Jerusalem. Philip was probably preaching in the towns upon the coast, while Peter and John were making converts in Samaria and Judæa: and when the two apostles returned to Jerusalem, they would bring with them intelligence which was far more favourable, than the most sanguine disciple could have looked for.

It is difficult always to assign causes for historical events: and it is certainly extraordinary that we do not read of another persecution in Jerusalem for

A. D. twelve or thirteen years. It is possible that the
31. calm was ruffled by many a passing storm, though St. Luke has not recorded them. His leading object, though not expressly stated, was evidently to trace the apostolical labours of St. Paul: beside which I have conjectured that he was himself at Antioch during this period, and had little communication with the church at Jerusalem. If we knew more of the civil and political transactions in Judæa, we might perhaps perceive causes, which would explain this absence of persecution: but to all appearance the state of things continued exactly the same. Pontius Pilate was still procurator of Judæa; and the two sons of Herod, Antipas and Philip, continued to enjoy their respective tetrarchies. Caiaphas also remained high priest for some years longer. The same opportunity would occur three times every year of exciting the foreign Jews against the Christians: and we may be sure, that the will would not be wanting in the sanhedrim. But still from some cause or other their opposition was ineffectual; and the affairs of the new sect became more organized and prosperous: from which we can hardly fail to infer, that the new plan of attack devised by the chief priests had lost its force; and that the mass of the people refused to be kept in excitement, where their feelings did not lead them to think themselves aggrieved.

St. Luke in a few words gives a delightful picture of the period which followed the conversion of Saul. *Then, he says, had the churches rest throughout all Judæa, and Galilee, and Samaria, and were edified: and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multi-*

plied^a. St. Luke does not specify, to what particular period of time he meant this description to apply: but he adds nothing, which would hinder us from extending it to the whole interval of time between the conversion of Saul in 31, and his being brought to Antioch by Barnabas in 42. We may also extract from a single word in this sentence an important fact, which we might not have learnt from his short and compendious narrative. He says that this rest was enjoyed by the churches of *Galilee*, though he had said nothing before of the gospel being preached in Galilee. We know however that our Saviour's most numerous followers, while he was upon earth, were in that country. Five hundred brethren are mentioned as having seen him at one time after his resurrection: and though we are not to suppose that all these persons understood his real character, yet it is highly probable, as I have already observed, that many of them may have been baptized on the day of Pentecost; and thus the gospel might very early have travelled into Galilee. Again, we know, that it was established in places more remote than Galilee, for it had made some progress in Damascus: and I have quoted St. Luke as saying, that some of the persons, who fled after the death of Stephen, went as far as Phœnicia, Antioch, and Cyprus. It is most probable, that these persons passed through Galilee: and this is another way, in which the gospel may have been introduced or extended in that country. Still however we have no account of any of the apostles, although they were Galilæans, having travelled thither: but there is reason to think, that in

A. D.
31.

^a Acts ix. 31.

A. D. 31. the year 32, which followed the conversion of Saul, St. Peter, and perhaps some other of the apostles, visited the churches in their native country. The fact of the apostles being Galilæans would be likely to cause a still more favourable reception to the gospel : and if the term *Galilæan* was already used by the other Jews as an epithet of reproach, this might make the inhabitants of Galilee feel proud of the appellation.

A. D. 32. In the verse which follows St. Luke's account of the churches having rest in Judæa, Galilee, and Samaria, we read of Peter *travelling*, or *making a circuit through all*. The expression is obscure ; and the detail of the narrative describes him as engaged in Judæa and Samaria : but I should certainly conceive, that Galilee is also to be included in the places which he visited : and if this took place in the year 32, that year was marked by the important circumstance of the apostles no longer confining themselves to Jerusalem, but taking short journeys to visit the believers in different towns. When we consider the astonishing progress which the gospel had made in a few months, and the number of places in which it had been received, we shall perhaps conclude, that the year 32, i. e. the second year from the crucifixion, is not too early for these first apostolical journeys of St. Peter. The state of the Christians in these scattered towns and villages must have been a constant subject of anxiety to the apostles. They would be in danger every where from the bigoted adherents of the Law : and in Samaria in particular, there was great fear of their corrupting the gospel by the false philosophy, which had been preached by Simon Magus. To save them from these perils, and

to keep them firm in the true faith, the apostles appear to have been in the habit of making short journeys from Jerusalem to visit them. St. Luke only mentions two or three such visits of St. Peter: but it is most probable, that all the apostles were engaged in the same labour: and though the care of the churches was divided among twelve, yet the critical state of them might warrant us in saying even then, that *the harvest indeed was plentiful, but the labourers were few.*

St. Luke says, that the churches in these different places *were edified*: an expression, which as well as the other of being *established* or *confirmed*, seems always to denote the settlement of certain rules and regulations, which were called for by the increasing numbers. That some order was established in these infant congregations, cannot be doubted: the mere necessity of instruction would give to the teachers a superiority over the taught: and it is demonstrable, that the authority of the apostles was considered supreme. The apostles however could not always be present; and whoever were left by them, as instructors of the new converts, would naturally be invested with some sort of superintendence. A charge of this kind could not then have been an object of ambition; and although in one sense it was a high and honourable office, it imposed a fearful responsibility upon him who filled it. It was necessary, however, that the post of danger should be occupied: and though we know little of the constitution of the early church, it seems most probable that a ministry, something like that of the seven deacons, was established in every place, where there were believers. When the apostles visited any of these places, they

A. D.
32.

gave public instruction, they worked miracles, and imparted those visible gifts of the Spirit, which no one but an apostle could communicate; but there were many things of daily occurrence, which the apostles, with their numerous other duties, and not being always on the spot, could not, and would not attempt to attend to. It is possible, that in some cases they brought with them persons from Jerusalem, whose usefulness had already been proved in the church there: and these persons (like Philip the deacon before the apostles came to Samaria) would be left to superintend the common concerns of the congregation. These ministers, however, or deacons, (for this name seems to have been the one generally adopted,) would often be selected from the new believers themselves; and their number would be decided by the number of the whole body. Such persons would have to regulate the times and places of public meetings, to offer prayers, to explain the scriptures and the peculiar doctrines of the gospel, to baptize new converts, to provide for the mystical eating of the body and blood of Christ; and their office would especially require them to consider the poorer brethren, to excite the wealthier to give to those who were in need, and to manage the distribution of the money which was collected for this charitable purpose. For the discharge of all these duties, the deacons would receive instructions from the apostles, and would look for their model to the system pursued in the parent church at Jerusalem. But there was a difference between this church and that in every other place: for in Jerusalem some of the apostles were always at hand, to whom the deacons and inferior ministers might refer for direction

and advice: but in the provincial churches of Judæa, Samaria, and Galilee, this advantage was to be had less frequently; and it is obvious, that in the more distant places, where the wants perhaps were more urgent, the visits of the apostles would be subject to longer intervals. It seems highly probable, that this inconvenience was met by the apostles appointing one person in each community of Christians to superintend the whole; and this, I conceive, was the natural and almost necessary origin of a new office being established in the church, that of presbyters or elders. St. Luke tells us nothing as to the time or the cause of these ministers being first appointed. We may conclude, that there was no such office, when the deacons were chosen: and what I have said of the apostles being always at Jerusalem, would shew that it was not wanted; for the apostles themselves were the elders, from whom the deacons received their commission and subsequent instructions. The first time, when the existence of elders is mentioned by St. Luke, is when Saul and Barnabas went with contributions from Antioch to Jerusalem in the year 43 or 44^b. It is plain, that at that time they held a distinct and definite office in the church: and St. Luke, who wrote several years later, forgot that he had said nothing of its first institution. All therefore which we can collect from St. Luke is, that presbyters or elders were appointed at Jerusalem some time between the years 32 and 43 or 44: and my own conclusion would be, that they were appointed very early, and were the necessary consequence of churches being established in distant places, which the apostles could

^b Acts xi. 30.

A. D. 32. only visit occasionally. I cannot see, that this simple hypothesis is at all affected by the question of episcopacy. The language of Beza, one of the most strenuous advocates of presbyterian government, appears to me unanswerably to prove the conclusion which I have drawn. He says, "It was essential, and has for ever existed according to the perpetual ordinance of God, that some one should take the chief active management in the presbytery, having a priority of place and rank, with that power which is given to his office by God:" and again, "No assembly of presbyters can be said to be rightly constituted, in which there is no ἡγούμενος, or person to take the lead." These passages from Beza might perhaps be used to prove more than what I at present draw from them: but whoever considers the state of a Christian community, even when its numbers were fewest, can hardly fail to subscribe to the position of Beza, that some one person must have taken the lead.

I have supposed this one person to have been appointed by the apostles: and I would here observe, that there is no evidence of a deacon or elder taking upon him such an office in these early times, unless he was appointed by an apostle, or by some one who had himself received his commission from an apostle. This appointment was made by the laying on of hands: and it seems plain, that this apostolical ordination, if I may so term it, conveyed the visible and miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost.

If the view here taken of the first institution of presbyters be correct, they were likely to exist in some of the neighbouring towns before they were wanted in Jerusalem. And such perhaps was the

fact. The apostles and a sufficient number of deacons would provide for all the wants of the Christians in Jerusalem: but it was almost unavoidable, that some of the deacons would be more active, and would insensibly acquire more influence than the rest. This would particularly be the case with those, who were literally presbyters in age: and the name of this office might perhaps lead us to infer, what seems indeed most natural, that the presbyters, who were left by the apostles in the different towns, were selected from the other brethren on account of their age. There would of course be exceptions to this rule; and, as is often the case with names, the original meaning of this would sometimes be not observed; and the term *presbyter*, like that of *senator* at Rome, would come to be applied without any regard to seniority. It ought perhaps to be observed, that the Jewish church furnished an analogy for the office of presbyters or elders: and though I cannot agree with those persons, who derive the three orders of bishops, priests, and deacons from corresponding orders in the Jewish church, yet the apostles, as Jews, when they found the necessity of giving the chief authority to some one of the deacons, were not unlikely to think of the manner, in which the temple-service was arranged, and might have marked this office with a name which was already one of dignity and respect. This notion will perhaps appear still more plausible, if it be true, that each synagogue had its own elder or elders, who managed the concerns of that particular congregation^c.

^c Concerning the office of *ag.* III. 1. part. I. c. 1. p. 609.
presbyter, see Vitringa, *de Syn-* Carpzovius, *in Epist. ad Heb.*

A. D.
32.

Though I have thus supposed the office of elder to be owing to the wants of the local churches in different towns, it may perhaps be inferred, that the absence of the apostles in visiting these churches led also to the creation of a new office, and to an appointment of still greater importance in the church of Jerusalem. The early writers are unanimous in speaking of James, the brother or cousin of our Lord, as the first bishop of Jerusalem: and though St. Luke is again silent as to the fact or the date of any such appointment, yet he mentions James in such a manner, as fully to confirm this tradition, and to shew that in the concerns of the church at Jerusalem he had equal authority with the apostles^d. An incidental expression of St. Paul^e seems to prove that James was in possession of this authority as early as the third year after his own conversion, i. e. in the year 33: and my own conjecture would be, that the apostles appointed him to superintend the church at Jerusalem, when they found themselves so repeatedly called away to distant parts of the country. Some ancient writers have asserted, that he was appointed to this office by our Lord himself^f: but though every act of the apostles was in one sense the act of their Master, I should not press the literal sense of this tradition any further, than as confirming the notion of his being appointed early. It was the impossibility of seeing to the temporal as well

p. 499. Buddeus, *de Eccles. Apost.* c. 6. p. 719. Pfaffius, *de Orig. Jur. Eccl.* p. 49.

^d Acts xii. 17. xv. 13. xxi. 18. Perhaps also this is the reason why he calls Jude *the brother of James* in his Gospel,

vi. 16. and Acts i. 13.

^e Gal. i. 19.

^f Euseb. *H. E.* VII. 19. Chrys. *in 1 Cor.* xv. 7. Epiphani. *Hær.* LXXXVIII. 7. Hieron. *in Gal.* i. 19.

as the spiritual concerns of their converts, which led the apostles to appoint the seven deacons: but though the trouble of much practical detail was thus taken off their hands, they were still the persons, to whom, as I said before, the deacons would apply for instructions. When, however, they were constantly leaving Jerusalem, and the increase of the provincial churches was sufficient to occupy all of them, the deacons of the parent church would be able to have less of their direction and advice. This would naturally lead, as I said before, to some of the deacons at Jerusalem being more active and influential than the rest: and it was then, perhaps, that the same order was introduced into the parent church, which had already existed in the provincial towns. The oldest or most trustworthy of the deacons would be constituted elders: and the absence of the apostles, as well as their incessant occupations, would give to the elders almost the sole management of the church at Jerusalem. Perhaps the silence of St. Luke has concealed from us some painful facts, which the usual imperfections of the human mind might have prepared us to expect even thus early. It is possible, that the apostles may have seen, or at least anticipated, some of those baneful effects of jealousy and ambition, which have sometimes disgraced the rulers of the church in succeeding ages: and we may be sure, that many evil consequences were avoided, if it was now, as I should conclude, that the apostles appointed James to be bishop of Jerusalem. I may add, that Eusebius, in his Chronicle, appears to place the appointment of James in the second year after the crucifixion^g.

^g L. Cappellus is certainly wrong, when he says that James

A. D.
32.

I use the term *bishop* in accordance with the statement of all the ecclesiastical writers; though I by no means intend to affirm that this was the title given at first to James; or that the office, which he bore, was analogous to that of bishop in later times. If the Epistle to Titus was written, as I suppose, in the year 51, and the first Epistle to Timothy in 52, these are the earliest instances, in which the Greek term ἐπίσκοπος, or *bishop*, is used: and it was used by St. Paul in his address to the elders of Ephesus, which I should suppose to have been delivered in the year 53. We thus find, that the term *bishop* was in use nineteen or twenty years after the date which I should assign to the appointment of James: and it is demonstrable, that at that time the terms *bishop* and *presbyter* were partly convertible. Every presbyter was by the nature of his office an ἐπίσκοπος, or *overseer*, of the rest of the flock: but that every person, who was called *episcopus*, was merely on a level with every other presbyter, has perhaps been too hastily assumed: and certainly the ecclesiastical writers, who spoke of James as bishop of Jerusalem, intended to assign him a decided preeminence over every other officer in the church. Without then entering further into this question, I should give it as the unanimous opinion of the early writers, that the apostles appointed James, the brother or cousin of our Lord, to superintend the concerns of the church at Jerusalem. I conceive it to be very probable, that this appointment was made as early as the year 32, or the second year after the conversion

the son of Zebedee (who was killed A. D. 44.) was head of the church of Jerusalem till his

death, when he was succeeded by James the son of Alphaeus. *Hist. Apost.* p. 9, 50. *

of Saul: and I also conceive it to have been caused by the care of so many other churches devolving upon the apostles, and the necessity of their frequent journeys in Judæa, Samaria, and Galilee. James was to all intents and purposes an apostle in power and authority; though he was not, in the literal sense of that term, an envoy or ambassador to preach the gospel in different countries. The office, to which he was specially appointed, precluded him from doing this: but I conceive him to have had full power over the presbyters and deacons; to have appointed other persons to those stations, when the occasion required; to have seen that these ministers fulfilled their duty with respect to the poor: and though it is not expressly said, I should conclude, that the distinctive mark of an apostle, the power of conferring the miraculous gifts of the Spirit, was possessed by James. Whenever any of the apostles were present in Jerusalem, his office was not superseded, nor did the apostles cease to have the paramount authority. The name of James is sometimes mentioned first, even before that of Peter and John: and this remarkably confirms the ecclesiastical tradition, that he was head of the church at Jerusalem: but he was mentioned first, because the apostles had conceded to him the whole temporal and spiritual management of the parent church: if the occasion required, and if any of them happened to be present, they formed a sort of council to deliberate upon any new occurrence; and for ordinary matters he seems to have consulted with the presbyters. We may say, perhaps, that the church at Jerusalem was left by the apostles to the care of the elders under the direction of James: or it might be

A. D.
32.

A. D.
32.

equally correct to say, that it was left to James, who was assisted by a council of elders : and this is the impartial conclusion to which I should come, without any reference to the bearing which it may have upon the much disputed question of episcopacy.

There are several other points connected with the history of James, which might naturally present themselves in an ecclesiastical history, but the details of which would be much too tedious and minute for the present occasion. Upon some of these points I cannot give even the general result with certainty, for different opinions are still entertained. I cannot, however, avoid touching upon two questions, which are closely connected with the personal history of James : 1, in what sense he was the brother of our Lord ; 2, whether he was one of the twelve apostles.

That James, Joses, Simon, and Judas, though called the brothers of our Lord, were not literally so, i. e. that they were not sons of the same mother, Mary, by her husband Joseph, is the conclusion now generally adopted. If we compare the accounts given by the different Evangelists concerning the women, who were present at the crucifixion^b, it seems certain, that these four brothers were sons of Mary, the sister of the Virgin and the wife of Clopas. They were therefore not brothers, but cousins of our Lord : and the notion of their being half-brothers, or the sons of Joseph by a former wife, cannot be maintained. That the Virgin Mary should have a sister of the same name, is certainly a difficulty : but it is a difficulty, which attends every hypothesis, and which results from the express words of St. John,

^b Matt. xxvii. 56. John xix. 25.

who speaks of *the mother of Jesus, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas*. It is possible, that A. D.
32. the term *sister* is here to be taken in the same sense with that in which I have supposed the term *brother* to be used, and that the two Mariés were not sisters but cousins. In this case, James, Joses, Simon, and Judas would be second cousins of our Lord. There is also a tradition preserved by some early writersⁱ, that Joseph and Clopas were two brothers, each of whom married a wife named Mary: and thus the two Mariés would be sisters-in-law, and their respective children would, as before, be cousins. I shall not do more than mention these different hypotheses, all of which seem to support the conclusion, that James the bishop of Jerusalem was cousin of Jesus Christ^k.

With respect to the second question, whether he was one of the twelve apostles, I have already delivered my own opinion in the negative, when I spoke of him as appointed by the apostles to supply their place. It is certainly possible, that they might have chosen one of their own number to fill this important station; though their special commission to preach the gospel to every creature would seem hardly to have allowed of one of them being thus limited to Jerusalem: and the voice of ecclesiastical antiquity is certainly in favour of the bishop of Jerusalem not being one of the twelve^l. Those who maintain the affirmative suppose him to be James the son of Alphæus, and they assert that the same

ⁱ Hegesippus apud Eus. *H. E.* III. 11. IV. 22. Epiphanius, *Hær.* LXXVIII. 7. p. 1039.

^k See Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. I. p. 1126. Lardner, c. 16. vol. VI. p. 162.

^l This was the opinion of Eusebius, Epiphanius, Gregory of Nyssa, Chrysostom, Theodoret, Jerom, Constit. Apost.

A. D.
32.

Hebrew characters would express the name of Alphæus or Clopas. I cannot however subscribe to this notion : and when St. Luke mentions *Judas the brother of James* among the twelve apostles, I conceive him not to have referred to *James the son of Alphæus*, (for then he would not have placed Simon Zelotes between the two brothers,) but to James the bishop of Jerusalem ; and he distinguished Jude by this epithet, because all his readers would know who was meant by James. In the same manner this Jude at the beginning of his Epistle describes himself as *brother of James* ; all which seems to confirm the notion, that James was a well known person, and held some high station.

The precise time, at which James the cousin of our Lord became one of his followers, is not ascertained. St. John informs us, that when Jesus was about to attend the feast of Tabernacles in the year 30, his brethren did not then believe on him^m : but if I am correct in supposing, that Jude, the brother of James, who was one of the twelve, was also one of these brethren, we may perhaps conclude, that St. John meant only to say, that *all* the brethren of Jesus did not believe on him : for it is most probable, that Jude was at this time chosen to be an apostle. If this be so, perhaps James was not a follower of Jesus so early as this feast of Tabernacles : and we may find another reason for thinking so in what took place at the election of Matthias. We know that the cousins of our Lord were at Jerusalem, and attended the apostles, in the interval between the Ascension and Pentecostⁿ. James therefore at that trying time exhibited his faith ; and his zeal must

^m John vii. 5.

ⁿ Acts i. 14.

have been preeminently conspicuous, or he would not in the following year have been singled out to preside over the church at Jerusalem. His name, however, was not put forward with those of Matthias and Barsabas: and since Peter advised the election to be made from persons who had accompanied Jesus from the beginning of his ministry, we may perhaps conclude that this was not the case with James. Some ancient writers have said, that he was the young man mentioned by St. Mark^o, who, when our Saviour was seized in the garden, left his linen garment and ran away naked^p: and another has added, that the person who laid hold of him, mistook him for our Saviour on account of his likeness^q. But little dependance is to be placed upon stories such as these. I should, however, be inclined to think, that he was the James intended by St. Paul, to whom our Lord vouchsafed a special appearance of himself after his resurrection^r: and this perhaps would indicate something peculiar in his attachment to Jesus. We have no means of ascertaining the exact nature of the services which raised him to his high station. His relationship to Jesus Christ perhaps assisted his claims, which must have been otherwise great: and if he was one of those who remained in Jerusalem during Saul's persecution, that would have recommended him to the apostles and to all the brethren. This relationship to Jesus was certainly reckoned a distinction: and we know, that several years later the descendants of these brothers were distinguished on that ground,

A. D.
32.

^o xiv. 51.

lived at the end of the fourteenth century.

^p Epiphani. vol. I. p. 1045.

Theophylact.

^r 1 Cor. xv. 7.

^q Petrus de Natalibus, who

A. D.
32.

and the peculiar name of *θεσπύονοι* was given them on account of their connection with *our Lord*^s. Whether James himself left any descendants, might be doubted. St. Paul certainly speaks of the brothers of our Lord being married^t; but his words, if taken literally, would seem to apply to those who travelled into different countries: and we cannot tell, whether they also included James, who continued at Jerusalem^u. With respect to the other brothers, we shall have to consider Simon hereafter, who is said to have succeeded James as bishop of Jerusalem; though Origen confesses that he knew nothing concerning Joses and Simon^x. I have already conjectured, that Jude was one of the twelve apostles: and these details will perhaps be excused on account of the high character and preeminent station, which have caused the memory of James to be preserved. The tradition, which assigns to him the surname of *the Just*, appears to be entitled to credit^y; though many things were reported of him by early writers, which can only be looked upon as fables. I may perhaps have occasion to notice some of these traditions hereafter: and the martyrdom of James forms a melancholy sequel to the little which I have here collected of his early history. We may now return to the period, at which I have supposed him to be appointed bishop of Jerusalem, when the

^s Hegesippus, apud Eus. H. E. I. 7.

^t 1 Cor. ix. 5.

^u That he was not married, is said by Epiphanius, *Hær.* LXXVIII. 13. p. 1045. Hieron. *adv. Jovin.* lib. I. See Schmidius, *de Apostolis uxoralis*, §. 7. p. 60.

^x In Mat. tom. X. 17. vol. III. p. 463.

^y According to Hegesippus (apud Eus.) he was also called *Oblis*, which he interprets to mean *περιοχή του λαού*. Scaliger says that *Ophlias* might signify *ὀχύρωμα Θεοῦ*.

churches were increasing in Judæa and Galilee ; and the apostles, having provided for the care of the parent church, were able to absent themselves in visiting different towns. A. D.
32.

St. Luke, as I have already observed, speaks only of Peter undertaking these journeys ; and the rapid spread of Christianity seems less extraordinary, when we read of the miracles which he worked, and of his raising the dead to life. It may be thought strange that St. Luke, who takes so little notice of the apostles during this interval, should mention only St. Peter, and should single out particularly the miracles at Lydda and Joppa. There seems however a very sufficient reason for this specification. St. Luke, who in this part of his history is so concise, yet devotes nearly two entire chapters to the conversion of Cornelius ; and we can easily understand why this story is told so circumstantially. The angel, who appeared to Cornelius, told him to send to Joppa ; and Peter's trance took place at Joppa. St. Luke therefore merely wished to explain what it was which had caused Peter to be at Joppa ; and he could hardly relate this without stating, that the disciples at Joppa had sent to him, because they heard of his having cured Æneas of his paralysis in the neighbouring town of Lydda. St. Luke therefore, intending to narrate the important conversion of Cornelius, went a little further back in the history, in order to account for Cornelius not sending to Peter at Jerusalem : and when he said, that Peter was at this time travelling or making a circuit through several places, he could perhaps have added, that most or all of the other apostles were engaged in similar journeys.

A. D.
32.

The conversion of Cornelius, though told by St. Luke with the minuteness which it deserves, has nothing to mark its date: and there are few points, concerning which commentators have more widely differed. Being obliged to assign it to some period, I cannot help expressing my opinion, that it happened earlier than what is generally supposed: and I ground this upon the probability, that the question of Gentile converts would have occurred early, and therefore would not have been left undecided. I can hardly conceive the gospel to have made the progress which it did in so many towns of Judæa, without attracting the notice of some of the Gentile inhabitants: but that Cornelius furnished the first instance of a Gentile convert, cannot, I think, be doubted; and it was on account of this being the first decision of the case, that St. Luke relates it in detail. I should not indeed have been surprised, if the question had been agitated within a few months, or even a few weeks, of the memorable day of Pentecost: and when the dispersion of the deacons after the death of Stephen carried the gospel into distant parts of Judæa, it was fully to be expected, that some Gentiles would be anxious to receive it. Pursuing these considerations, I should not hesitate to conclude, that the conversion of Cornelius might have happened in the year thirty-two, i. e. in the second year after the crucifixion: and whatever difficulty may attend this early date, it appears to me much more extraordinary to suppose, that no Gentile should by this time have presented himself for baptism^z.

^z Tillemont, who placed the crucifixion in 33, placed the conversion of Cornelius in 35; and the Chronicle of Alexandria says that it took place two years after the ascension. L.

The question can hardly be considered yet decided, whether Cornelius was a proselyte or no: and this partly involves another question, whether the division is correct into *proselytes of righteousness* and *proselytes of the gate*. That the Law and the practice of the Jews allowed them to make proselytes, cannot be doubted; so that with respect to what have been called *the proselytes of righteousness*, i. e. Gentiles, who adopted circumcision and every other ordinance of the Mosaic Law, there is no room for discussion. It is equally plain, that Cornelius was not a proselyte in this sense of the term, as is apparent through the whole story, and particularly from the remonstrance made to Peter, that *he went in to men uncircumcised, and did eat with them*. This question indeed had been settled already: for Nicolas the deacon is called by St. Luke *a proselyte of Antioch*: and though it is not expressly stated, I have little doubt that St. Luke distinguished him by this title, because it was one which applied also to himself. There is, however, great room for doubt, whether the distinction of *proselyte of the gate* is not more fanciful than real: or whether, as is often the case, the persons who have discussed this point, have not in a great measure disputed about words. That many Gentiles, who lived in the neighbourhood of Jews, and particularly in Palestine, were persuaded to adopt a purer form of religion, and to worship the one spiritual Being, the God of the Jews, might reasonably be expected, and was certainly the fact. The reader of the New Testament will remember many expres-

A. D.
32.

Cappellus supposed Cornelius the abode of Saul in Arabia, to have been converted during *Hist. Apost.* p. 40.

A. D.
32.

sions, which speak of such persons as *devout, and worshipping or fearing God*. They would perhaps differ from each other as to the greater or less degree, in which they conformed to the Mosaic Law; and I would not deny, that in some cases the term *proselyte of the gate* may have been the received appellation^a. But without entering further into this question, it is plain, that Cornelius was one of these persons. The expressions of *devout, and fearing God*, are applied to him: he observed the Jewish hours of fasting and prayer; and it is worthy of remark, that St. Peter in his address refers him to the prophets, which he would hardly have done, if he had not known, that the Jewish prophets were regarded by Cornelius. There was perhaps no town in the Roman empire, in which the mind of Cornelius might not have received this religious impression from an intercourse with Jews: but there is perhaps something remarkable in the fact of his belonging to the forces, which at this time were quartered at Cæsarea. This town, as I have already stated, was the ordinary residence of the Roman Procurator: and since that officer always went up to Jerusalem at the festivals with a military force, it is by no means improbable, if I am correct as to the date of this event, that Cornelius may have been in Jerusalem with Pilate at the Passover when Jesus was crucified. We may remember, that Pilate's examination of Jesus was made in the presence of his soldiers; and they were the Roman soldiers, who amused themselves with insulting and mocking Je-

^a Concerning this question, see Lardner, vol. VI. p. 216. vol. X. p. 307.

sus. I merely mention this, because if Cornelius was then at Jerusalem, he must have witnessed some of these things. He may have heard Jesus pronounced innocent by Pilate; he may have observed his patient suffering under the insults and cruelty of the soldiers; and he could hardly fail to have been present at some part of the scene of the crucifixion. When St. Peter addressed Cornelius, he certainly assumed, that he was acquainted with the outline of the history of Jesus: he appeals to him as knowing that his ministry began in Galilee, after the preaching of John the Baptist, and that it ended with his being crucified at Jerusalem. Cornelius, as I have observed, might have been led to acquaint himself with these things, when he attended Pilate to Jerusalem: but the date, which I have assigned for his conversion, may perhaps appear to be confirmed, when we remember that Philip the deacon was at this time in Cæsarea, and had returned thither only a few months before from preaching the gospel in Samaria. When St. Luke speaks of St. Paul meeting with Philip, twenty years after this, at Cæsarea, he calls him Philip *the Evangelist*; which honourable title must have been given him on account of the zeal, with which he was known to preach the gospel. The warmth and the success of that zeal at the beginning of his ministry, we have already considered: and if this was the case in Samaria, where the people were strange to him, and where he staid but a short time, we may well suppose with what earnestness he laboured to convert his friends and fellow townsmen in Cæsarea. It is highly probable, that the conversion of Cornelius was the effect of Philip's preaching: and we thus

A. D.
32.

A. D. 32. have an account of the gospel first making its way among the Roman soldiers.

Concerning the subsequent history of Cornelius the scripture is silent. There are some vain and unfounded traditions of his having been bishop of Cæsarea^b: but there was a fancy in the third or fourth century for inventing such stories of all the persons, whose names are mentioned in the New Testament: and this is not entitled to the smallest credit. St. Luke evidently inserted this history on account of the importance of the case which was decided: but though a great step was thus gained in removing the prejudices of the Jews, we must not think that this was the final step. Even if it should not be admitted, that Cornelius was a proselyte of the gate, he certainly was not an idolatrous Gentile: neither do the Jews appear to have thought, that the baptism of Cornelius was a precedent for admitting all Gentiles whatever. This full and final extension of the gospel was left, as we shall see, for the ministry of St. Paul, and did not take place till several years after. It can hardly be doubted, that the believers in general did not fully acquiesce in the admission of Cornelius. They could not answer St. Peter at the time, and they acknowledged, though perhaps confining their remark to Cornelius, that *God also to the Gentiles had granted repentance unto life*: but the ancient prejudices seem partly to have revived: and nothing perhaps but a vision from heaven would have satisfied the scruples of St. Peter himself.

This journey of St. Peter through Lydda and Joppa to Cæsarea, and so back again to Jerusalem, I have

^b See Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. I. p. 222, 738.

supposed to have been made in some part of the year 32: and I have also supposed, that the other apostles were engaged in making similar circuits through different parts of Judæa, Samaria, and Galilee. We read of no circumstance favourable or unfavourable, which happened to these churches for some time after: but though there is every reason to think that their numbers increased, and that in a spiritual sense they continued to flourish, yet if we may judge from what took place in Damascus, the Jews were unremitting in their hostility to the gospel.

A. D.
32.

We left Saul, at the end of the year 31, retiring into Arabia. I have supposed him to have continued there the whole of the following year, and in that seclusion to have received by special revelation a knowledge of the doctrines which he was to preach. His own expression is, that *he conferred not with flesh and blood*^c: from which we need not understand, that he had no intercourse with mankind during his residence in Arabia: but he alludes to his having been instructed in the gospel, not by man, but immediately by Jesus Christ: and these mysterious revelations were first made to him in Arabia. In the third year after his conversion he returned again to Damascus. It was then that the preaching of Saul appears properly to have begun. We are told that he went boldly into the synagogues, and asserted there the great doctrine of the gospel, that Jesus Christ was the Son of God. At first he was looked upon with suspicion by all parties. His appearance would naturally excite inquiry, and all that the Christians could hear of him was, that he had been a violent persecutor of the church at Jeru-

A. D.
33.

^c Gal. i. 16.

A. D.
33.

salem. This seems demonstrably to prove, that his stay in Damascus immediately after his conversion must have been extremely short. Whether Ananias was now in Damascus, and able to bear testimony to his conversion, we are not informed: but the zeal and boldness of his preaching would soon satisfy the Christians, that their suspicions were groundless. These same qualities could not fail to exasperate the Jews: but it seems plain, that the Christians were now very numerous, or the Jews would not have found it so difficult to silence one man. Two years before, the letters of the high priest had struck terror into Damascus, which authorized the seizing of the Christians, and bringing them before the synagogues: but now Saul disputed openly in the synagogues, and when his enemies could not answer him, and sought to kill him, they dared not attempt any thing but despatching him privately. The friends of Saul now thought it advisable that he should leave the city, but the Jews contrived to throw impediments in his way. Damascus was still in the hands of Aretas the Arabian prince, as I have supposed it to have been at the time of Saul's conversion. I then said, that Aretas would be likely to grant any favour to the Jews, with a view of detaching them from Herod, with whom he was at war; and if they asked him for assistance in persecuting the Christians, he would at least have thrown no obstacle in their way. This state of things, which was then partly conjecture, appears actually to have existed, when Saul returned from Arabia. The officer, who held the city for Aretas, allowed his soldiers to watch the gates, that Saul might not escape: and since it is impossible to conceive that the Arabian could care

for Saul's religious opinions, I can only conclude that he took this step, because he had been instructed by his master to do every thing to conciliate the Jews. Saul however contrived to escape, by being let down at night from the walls in a basket; and instead of going to his own country of Cilicia, he proceeded at once to Jerusalem.

A. D.
33.

It might be thought perhaps from Saul's own words, that even if he had not been forced to leave Damascus thus hastily, he had reasons of his own for going to Jerusalem: at least he says, when speaking of this journey, that he went thither *to see Peter*^d: and much discussion has been raised as to the object which he could have had in wishing to see Peter, rather than any other of the apostles. The Roman Catholics dwell much upon this passage, as supporting the primacy of Peter, and shewing that even Saul considered it to be his duty to consult him. This, however, would require us to make this single passage contradict the whole tenor of Saul's conduct, and his own express words in other places: and it appears to me, that a much more natural and consistent account may be given of his wishing at this time to see Peter. That his seclusion in Arabia had been the means of opening his mind to the doctrines of the gospel and to his own future labours, cannot, I think, be doubted. I conceive this period to have been to Saul a period of successive revelations, and mysterious communion with God. That the gospel was to be preached to all nations, and that he was himself to be the means of converting the Gentiles, was then undoubtedly revealed to him: and I say this, not only because it was announced to him in

^d Gal. i. 18.

A. D.
33.

a vision, which he had at this very time in Jerusalem^e, but because it had been expressly declared both to himself and to Ananias at the time of his conversion^f. He might not at the time have understood the full meaning of his being *a chosen vessel to bear the name of Jesus before the Gentiles*: but the words, which he then heard, must have been deeply engraved upon his heart; and when he returned to Damascus, and delivered the doctrines which he had received from heaven, I doubt not, that he himself well knew, that he was destined to labour in a far more extensive field. At present however he confined himself to disputing with the Jews. His own countrymen, who believed in Christ, were not yet prepared for that full extension of the gospel, which had been made known to Saul by revelation. Whether any cases occurred, while he was in Damascus, of devout Gentiles being persuaded by his preaching, we are not informed. The fact however is not improbable: and Saul could hardly fail to let fall some intimations of his being destined by God to convert the Gentiles. Such an announcement, however cautiously made, would be sure to lead to some discussion at Damascus; and if I am right in the date of the conversion of Cornelius, the news of it, as soon as it reached that city, would have been particularly gratifying to Saul. He had already experienced the obstinate incredulity of the Jews; and his ardent mind would make him impatient for that time, when he was allowed to disclose the full extent of his commission. With this view I conceive him to have been particularly anxious to see Peter, when he went to Jerusalem: he probably knew, that there still

^e Acts xxii. 17.

^f ix. 15. xxii. 15. xxvi. 17.

were persons, who had scruples as to the baptism of Cornelius; and he therefore wished to discuss the subject with Peter himself; to hear from his own mouth the history of what he had done, and to acquaint him with the revelation, which he had himself received upon this subject from heaven. So far from going to consult Peter, or receive any instructions from him, as the church of Rome contends, there is good reason to think, that at this time the mind of Saul was more enlightened than that of Peter upon this question: he went to acquaint him with the subject of his own revelations; and to shew, that the baptism of Cornelius was entirely in accordance with the commission which he had himself received.

A. D.
33.

I have supposed this visit of Saul to Jerusalem to be made in the year 33, which was the year following the conversion of Cornelius. At this time St. Peter was in Jerusalem. He had either not set out upon another journey, subsequent to his return from Cæsarea, or he may again have concluded a similar excursion. It was about this period, according to some Roman Catholic writers, that he went to Antioch, and established himself as the bishop of that see. But such a notion seems utterly untenable. It is attended with historical and chronological difficulties, which it is impossible to remove; nor are there any grounds for saying that he held the see of Antioch for seven years: and no fact seems more certain, than that Peter did not visit Antioch till several years after the time of St. Paul going to see him at Jerusalem^g. The other apostles appear to

^g Tillemont discusses this question very impartially, and

A. D.
33.

have been absent, and engaged in visiting different churches : at least Saul speaks of having seen none except Peter, and *James the Lord's brother* : and as he staid in Jerusalem fifteen days, he could hardly have failed to see the other apostles, if they had been there. This therefore confirms the statement which I have made, that the apostles were now occupied in visiting the churches ; and that James, the cousin of our Lord, was left to take care of the church at Jerusalem.

When Saul first arrived there, he was received with the same suspicion, as when he returned to Damascus from Arabia. The Christians indeed at Jerusalem had stronger reasons to think of his former conduct : and from it not being known at Jerusalem, that he had been lately preaching the gospel. it would seem that his second visit to Damascus could not have been a long one. We are then told, that Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and acquainted them with his conversion. and his preaching at Damascus. By *the apostles* we are only to understand Peter and James : for the latter, though not strictly an apostle, was called so from the station which he filled ; and we find the title occasionally given to Barnabas and other persons. The last mention which we had of Barnabas was when he sold some of his property, and laid the money at the feet of the apostles, to be added to the common fund. A space of about two years had elapsed since that time, during which we know nothing of what happened to Barnabas ; neither are we told why Barnabas was the person, who assured

evidently agreed with the opinion which I have expressed. *Mémoires*, tom. I. p. 739.

A. D.
33.

the Christians at Jerusalem of the sincerity of Saul's conversion. I have mentioned, however, that one ancient writer speaks of Saul and Barnabas having studied together in the school of Gamaliel; and perhaps the tradition is confirmed by this apparent acquaintance between them, as well as by their future friendship. We may remember also, that Barnabas was a native of Cyprus: and if the vicinity of Tarsus to that island caused Barnabas to resort to it on account of the celebrity of its schools, it is possible, that his intimacy with Saul may have begun before they were fellow-pupils of Gamaliel. This might account for Barnabas being anxious to clear the character of Saul: and if we were acquainted with his history, during the last two years, it might perhaps explain, why he was better informed than the other Christians at Jerusalem, of what had lately happened to his former acquaintance. Among the persons who fled from Jerusalem after the death of Stephen, we are told by St. Luke, that some went and preached the gospel as far as Cyprus. The names of these persons are not mentioned; but there is nothing improbable in supposing that Barnabas was one of them: and we can prove by his conduct on two subsequent occasions, that he felt a warm interest in the conversion of his countrymen. If Barnabas went to Cyprus in the year 31, he had come back again to Jerusalem by 33: and it is very possible, that he heard on his way of the history of Saul. If he did not himself pass through Damascus ^h, he could hardly have failed to stop at Antioch, where, as we shall see presently, the gospel had already made some

^h Chrysostom says, that he had there heard of Saul, *in Act.*
had been to Damascus, and p. 196, b.

A. D. progress : and the Christians of Antioch were likely
 33. to have communication with those of Damascus. In
 this way Barnabas may have been able to remove
 the prejudice which existed against Saul : and the
 result seems to have been, that the services of Saul
 were immediately accepted as a preacher of the gos-
 pel. It might perhaps be inferred from St. Luke's
 words, that one of the three festivals was now ap-
 proaching : at least he speaks of Saul disputing with
 the Greciansⁱ, by which we are always to understand
 the foreign Jews. Barnabas may also have come to
 Jerusalem on account of this festival : and if Saul
 had staid longer in Jerusalem, he would perhaps
 have seen some more of the apostles, who would
 have met Peter there upon that occasion. The same
 scene, however, was now acted in opposition to Saul,
 as that, in which he had been the principal mover
 two years before. He was then one of the foreign
 Jews who disputed against Stephen, and when de-
 feated in argument he had recourse to force. He
 now in turn defended the gospel against the foreign
 Jews, and again, as in Damascus, his life was in
 danger. It was natural, that the Jews should be
 particularly violent against Saul as an apostate : and
 their opposition against him became so active, that
 it was thought better for Saul to retire before the
 storm. Nor was this only the suggestion of his
 friends. We know from his own words, that while
 he was praying in the temple, he had one of those
 visions which were so often vouchsafed to him, and

ⁱ Some copies of the Vulgate make him to have disputed with the *Gentiles* (*Ἕλληνας* pro' Ἕλλη-
νιστάς) : but it is at least doubt-

ful, whether the gospel was at this time openly preached to the unproselyted heathen in Jerusalem.

Jesus Christ himself told him to leave Jerusalem; repeating to him at the same time his former declaration, that he intended to send him to the Gentiles^k. He accordingly left Jerusalem after a stay of only fifteen days, and went to his native city Tarsus. We shall there leave him for several years. The state of the Christians at Jerusalem at this time is perhaps a specimen of what was their condition for a considerable period. The return of each festival, and the arrival of the foreign Jews, caused a more than ordinary activity in the enemies of the gospel. The Christians, however, had probably learnt to protect themselves on those occasions. The length of time, in which James presided over the church at Jerusalem, would seem to shew the prudence of his measures: and it is very apparent, that notwithstanding these short seasons of animosity, the gospel on the whole was rapidly, though silently advancing. This was likely to be the case in Judæa, Galilee, and Samaria, where the apostles were constantly making visits to the different towns: but the gospel had also made its way into places, which as yet had been visited by none of the apostles: and I shall begin the following lecture with considering the state of these churches.

A. D.
33.

^k Acts xxii. 17.

LECTURE V.

A. D.
33—35.

WE have hitherto considered the state of the churches in Judæa, Samaria, and Galilee. We have seen them rising out of the persecution which followed the death of Stephen, and prospering under the care of the apostles, who visited them from Jerusalem. In the mean time the gospel was making its way in other and more distant countries. I have said, that of the 3000, who were baptized at the first Pentecost, many may have been foreign Jews, and may have spread the gospel upon their return to their homes. The same effect may have been produced by the subsequent festivals; and we shall see reason to think that this was the case, when we come to consider the Roman church. It was perhaps the case with the Christians who have already attracted our notice, at Damascus. But I wish now to consider the places, which are expressly mentioned by St. Luke, and which, he says, received the gospel from the persons *who were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen.*

I have already stated, that these countries were Phœnicia, Antioch, and Cyprus; and it is reasonable to suppose, that the persons, who fled thither, were going to their respective homes. Concerning the Christians in Phœnicia we know little. There seem to have been several brethren there in 46^a:

^a Acts xv. 3.

and when St. Paul went to Jerusalem in 54, he A. D.
landed at Tyre, and found some disciples^b; but whe- 33—35.
ther the gospel had increased much in these twenty
years, we are not informed. I have already conjectured, that Barnabas may have been one of the persons, who carried the new doctrines into Cyprus; and if we may judge from the speed with which he and Saul traversed the island a few years afterwards, a considerable impression had already been made. The church, which requires most of our notice, and which is mentioned most in detail by St. Luke, is that of Antioch; a city, which was once the capital of Syria, and which was now the residence of the Roman officer, who governed that country with the title of president. The president of Syria was in fact responsible to Rome for the whole of Palestine: and the procurator of Judæa, and the two tetrarchs of Galilee and Trachonitis, though nominally independent, were often obliged to call in the aid of the president of Syria. The person, who held this station in the year of the crucifixion, was Silanus, who was succeeded in the year 34 by Vitellius: and the war, which I have mentioned as existing between Herod Antipas and Aretas, and which lasted some years, could not be uninteresting to the Roman commander at Antioch. We shall see, that Vitellius was at length ordered by Tiberius to pursue active measures against Aretas; but the Roman policy had perhaps suffered the war to continue thus long, that both combatants might exhaust their strength, and make themselves still more dependent upon Rome. In the account, which St. Luke has left us of the church at Antioch, we do

^b xxi. 4.

A. D. 33—35. not meet with any thing of Roman interference. We have seen indeed, that this was not likely to take place, except at the instigation of the Jews; and though we cannot suppose that the Jews withheld their opposition, nothing is said of their offering it with any success. We know from Josephus, that the Jews were extremely numerous in Antioch^c: but it is probable, that the excesses which they committed in their own country would not have been allowed in a Grecian city, commanded by a Roman garrison; and from some of these causes the gospel took root so early at Antioch, and flourished so rapidly, as almost to rival the parent church at Jerusalem.

Unfortunately there is a doubtful reading in the narrative of St. Luke^d, which leaves it uncertain, whether the first preachers at Antioch made converts among the Gentiles. Some critics have supposed, that they only preached to the Jews who spoke Greek; though this was so certain to be the case in the Grecian city of Antioch, where all the Jews probably spoke that language, that it is difficult to see why this circumstance was noticed by St. Luke: on the other hand, it is difficult to conceive, that the great question concerning Gentile converts was decided from the very first in the church at Antioch: unless we suppose, which is probably the real state of the case, that St. Luke meant to speak of two periods, and to say, that at first the gospel was preached only to the Jews, but that afterwards some other persons came to Antioch who converted the devout Gentiles. It has always been conceived, that the church at Antioch consisted in a

^c De Bel. Jud. VII. 3, 3.

^d xi 20, 'Ελληνιστὰς οὐτ' Ἕλληνας.

great measure of Gentile converts, and St. Luke's words certainly rather support the notion. The church in that city may be said to have been independent of the church at Jerusalem: it being nearly certain, as I have already stated, that the tradition of St. Peter having established himself there as bishop is entirely groundless. Its foundations were laid by persons who fled from Jerusalem; but it was beyond the utmost limits of Judæa, and out of the reach of those apostolical circuits, which we have seen to have been made in Judæa, Samaria, and Galilee. It is evident, that for a long time there was little communication between the believers in Antioch and Jerusalem: but still the gospel increased rapidly in the former city; and perhaps we may find a confirmation of this in the history of the impostor Apollonius of Tyana, who is said to have left Antioch in disgust, "a place which as usual conducted itself with insolence, and paid no regard to Grecian institutions^e." Apollonius was at Antioch some time between the years 37 and 47, which coincide with the rapid increase of the gospel there: and a heathen writer might have used these expressions, to describe the numerous conversions to Christianity.

We may thus conclude, that the Christians in Antioch and Jerusalem, though without any communication with each other, came both to the same decision, that devout Gentiles might be admitted to baptism; and perhaps they both began this practice about the same time. The news of what was passing at Antioch at length reached Jerusalem, though we are not told in what year the first direct notice

^e Philostratus, III. 58. p. 139.

A. D. 33—35. was taken of it. I should rather infer, that this flourishing state of the church at Antioch had gone on for a long time before any person visited it from Jerusalem: and in the fifth year after the crucifixion an event happened, which was likely to cause more communication between the two cities. Pontius Pilate, after holding the office of procurator of Judæa for nearly ten years, was removed on the following occasion. The Samaritans, whose attachment to Simon Magus we have already considered, were seduced in great numbers by another impostor in the year 35. Whether the general expectation of the Messiah led this person, like so many others about the same period, to assume that character, we are not informed: but an armed multitude followed him, and raised such a tumult in the country, that Pilate immediately marched some troops against them, and killed a great number. This severity caused the Samaritans to complain of Pilate to Vitellius the president of Syria, who immediately ordered the procurator to go to Rome, and answer for his conduct. The result was, that Tiberius banished him to Vienne in Gaul, and according to Eusebius he afterwards destroyed himself^f: his office of procurator was not at present renewed; and Judæa and Samaria were annexed to the presidentship of Syria. This, as I said before, was likely to cause more communication between Jerusalem and Antioch. Vitellius indeed soon after went in person to Jerusalem, and attended the passover^g. His conduct was on the whole gratifying to the Jews; and among other acts of authority, he displaced Caiaphas, who had held the office of high priest ten years, and

^f H. E. II. 7.^g Joseph. *Antiq.* XVIII. 4.

A. D.
36.

appointed Jonathan, who was son of Annas, or Ananias. A tradition has been preserved, but the authority of which is doubtful, that Caiaphas afterwards destroyed himself^h. We hear nothing of his open hostility to the Christians subsequent to the persecution of Saul. He was still in office, when Saul returned to Jerusalem in 33; and it may have been at his instigation, that the Jews raised that opposition to Saul, which caused him to leave the city. When Vitellius was at Jerusalem in 36, we do not hear, among his other measures, by which he gratified the Jews, that he aided them in persecuting the Christians: and if Caiaphas had not influence enough to keep his office of high priest, he was not likely to call the attention of Vitellius to the new sect. The presidents of Syria henceforth adopted the plan of frequently removing the high priests: and this may perhaps have contributed to the security of the Christians. The high priests, when they found the people not seconding them in their violence, were able sometimes to accomplish their object by means of the Roman soldiers. But when Pilate was removed, and the commander in chief was resident at Antioch, they had little chance of getting him to listen to their calumnies: and if Vitellius knew any thing of the Christians at Antioch, he would only know that they were quiet and inoffensive: added to which, the high priests being constantly in dread of their own removal, would be more anxious to benefit themselves, than to injure the Christians; and this frequent change would be likely to keep up the jealousy between the Pharisees and Sadducees: all which may perhaps account in some degree for

^h Constit. Apost. VIII. 2.

A. D. 36. the little molestation, which the Christians appear to have received.

It is possible, that when Vitellius attended the Passover in the year 36, some persons in his train acquainted the Christians at Jerusalem with the state of the church at Antioch: and it would be interesting to think, that Cornelius met with some soldiers, who had been converted like himself to the gospel. The following year 37 might have furnished another opportunity for conveying this intelligence. Vitellius was then again at Jerusalem during the Passover, having been ordered by Tiberius to take up the war, which Herod Antipas had carried on so long and so unsuccessfully against Aretasⁱ. Vitellius took that opportunity of paying another visit to Jerusalem, and deposed Jonathan, whom he had so lately made high priest, and appointed his brother Theophilus. Thus Annas had still influence to keep the office in his own family; and from what St. Luke tells us of Caiaphas, we may infer that the party of the Sadducees still had the advantage. Tiberius died on the 16th of March this year, and the news reached Jerusalem while Vitellius was there, who shortly after dismissed his troops and returned to Antioch.

I need not say more as to the means of communication between the two churches, which had thus become so flourishing independently of each other: and the Christians at Jerusalem gave a convincing proof of their anxiety for their brethren at Antioch. But before I mention the mission of Barnabas to the latter city, I may say something of another person, who now filled an important station in Judæa,

ⁱ Josephus, *Antiq.* XVIII. 5.

and who afterwards shewed himself inclined to persecute the Christians. This was Herod Agrippa, the son of Aristobulus, and grandson of Herod the Great; the vicissitudes of whose fortunes, in the early part of his life, are more suited for the drama or for romance, than the pages of real history. I must content myself with saying, that at the time of the death of Tiberius he was in prison at Rome: but fortunately for himself his crime consisted in having shewn too great attachment to Caligula: and when that prince succeeded to the empire, he not only immediately released Agrippa, but transferred him from a prison to a throne^k. His kingdom indeed was but small, consisting merely of the tetrarchies on the east of the Jordan, which had been vacant since the year 34 by the death of his uncle Philip. Such as it was, however, Agrippa left Rome in 38, with the title of king, to take possession of it. Fortune seemed now to be making up to him for his former sufferings. Herodias his sister, who was still living with Antipas, envied Agrippa his title of king; and in an evil hour persuaded her husband, if he may be so called, to go to Rome and solicit from the emperor the same distinction. Agrippa took care to anticipate his arrival by prejudicing the emperor against him: and the unfortunate journey of Antipas and Herodias to Rome ended in both of them being banished to Lyons in Gaul. The dominions of Antipas were then given to Agrippa, who thus became king of Galilee, and of nearly all the country on the east of the Jordan, which had belonged to Herod the Great. Judæa still continued subject to the president of Syria:

A. D.
37.

A. D.
38.

^k Joseph. *Antiq.* XVIII. 6. 10.

A. D. 38. which, as I observed before, was perhaps a favourable circumstance to the Christians: and since every thing had this result, which gave occupation to the Jewish authorities in Jerusalem, we may perhaps conceive, that the reign of Caligula, though disastrous in many respects to the Jews, was rather favourable than otherwise to the affairs of the Christians.

I need not dwell upon the dissensions in Alexandria between the Jews and other inhabitants, nor upon the advantage which was given to the latter by the contempt with which Caligula treated the Jewish ambassadors. These indignities, though great, were lost in the outrage inflicted upon the whole nation by the cruel attempt of Caligula to have his statue erected in the temple¹. This kept not only Jerusalem, but all Palestine, in a ferment, during nearly the whole of Caligula's reign. The edict enforcing this insult was issued in the year 39, and Petronius, who succeeded Vitellius as president of Syria, was ordered to carry it into execution. Fortunately Petronius had not courage or cruelty enough to exasperate a whole nation: and though his own head was likely to suffer for his forbearance, he continued to protract the business through the whole of the following year. Agrippa also went to Rome, to endeavour to persuade the emperor to relax: but before he had finally succeeded, or returned to his dominions, relief was given to mankind at large, as well as to the Jews, by the assassination of Caligula. This affair of the statue must entirely have absorbed the attention of the authorities at Jerusalem; and for two or three years no

¹ Joseph. *Antiq.* XVIII. 8.

time was allowed for shewing hostility to the Christians. The Christians indeed, as we know from their subsequent history, would have joined in the most determined opposition to the profanation of the temple. Their constant refusal to pay divine honours to the emperor was a frequent cause of their blood being shed by their heathen enemies : and the insult, which was now offered to the whole nation collectively, was perhaps the means of minor distinctions being forgotten, and of the progress of the gospel being overlooked in the midst of the general calamity.

A. D.
41.

We have evidence that this progress was constant and unceasing. The distress of the Jews was perhaps most general in Jerusalem and Judæa. During most of the agitation, Petronius and his forces were stationed at Ptolemais or Tiberias in Galilee ; and thus Antioch would be likely to be less disturbed by the general commotion. The consequence was, that the gospel increased rapidly in that city, and it would seem, that the Gentile converts were very numerous. St. Luke says, *Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem ; and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch.* I have already observed, that the date of this event is not mentioned. It is plain, however, that Barnabas was in Antioch in the year 41 or 42, and I should rather infer, that he had not been there long before. It was in the January of the former year that Caligula died : and since his death restored Judæa to a state of tranquillity, it was perhaps at that period, that the Apostles sent Barnabas from Jerusalem to Antioch. It is not improbable, that a principal motive for their taking this step was the

A. D. 41. account which they had received of the Gentile converts: and there are reasons, which might induce us to think, that there was no person more fit for such a mission than Barnabas, who had perhaps been fully informed by his friend Saul of the revelations which he had received concerning Gentile converts. This notion is confirmed by our reading shortly after, that Barnabas went to Tarsus to seek Saul, which brings us once more to the history of this extraordinary person.

We left him in the year 33, when he was obliged to quit Jerusalem, and when he went to his native city of Tarsus. The space of time, which he passed in that city, before he was brought to Antioch by Barnabas, is certainly a long one, and may perhaps appear an objection to the scheme of chronology which has been followed. We can however fix the time of his arrival in Antioch with tolerable accuracy, which could hardly have happened earlier than 41 or 42; and though this leaves a period of eight or nine years, which he passed at Tarsus, the difficulty attending such a notion appears to me much less, than that of placing his conversion later. The difficulty indeed principally consists in our supposing Saul to have passed eight or nine years at Tarsus in inactivity: but if it can be shewn, that this was perhaps by no means the case, the objection is at least considerably lessened. The words of Saul himself, when he is describing that part of his life which followed his departure from Jerusalem, are as follows; *Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia: and was unknown by face unto the churches of Judæa which were in Christ: but they had heard only, that he, which persecuted us in times past, now*

*preacheth the faith which once he destroyed*¹. If we take these words literally, they can only be interpreted to mean, that after Saul left Jerusalem, it was known to the Christians in that city, that he was engaged in preaching the gospel. The same inference might be drawn from his saying, that *he came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia*. St. Luke tells us, that he went to Tarsus: and if Saul himself had only said, that he came into Cilicia, the two statements would have been the same. But he speaks also of *the regions of Syria*; and since I cannot suppose this to be an unmeaning addition, I can only infer, that Saul was employed in preaching, not merely in Tarsus, but in different places in Syria and Cilicia. We shall see other reasons hereafter for concluding, that churches were founded by him in these two countries: and if his preaching extended far into Syria, it could hardly have failed to be known to the Christians at Antioch. This was perhaps the case, and may partly account for Barnabas going to Tarsus to seek Saul: but I should rather infer, that his preaching was principally confined to the places in the neighbourhood of Tarsus. It may be mentioned here, that a calculation of dates will require us to fix in some part of these eight or nine years, that extraordinary vision or rapture, which he speaks of having received, when he was *caught up into the third heaven, or Paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter*^m. This appears to have happened some time about the year 38, or five years after his having gone to Tarsus: and we may understand from this, that he still received similar revela-

A. D.
41.

¹ Gal. i. 21.

^m 2 Cor. xii. 2, &c.

A. D.
41.

tions to those which he had experienced during his seclusion in Arabia. He speaks at the same time of *the abundance or excess of revelations* which were granted to him : and it might be thought that the infirmity, whatever it might be, which was sent as a sort of corrective to spiritual pride, came upon him soon after the rapture already mentioned.

A. D.
42.

It seems most probable, that Saul arrived at Antioch in 42, which was the second year of the reign of Claudius ; and St. Luke says expressly, that he and Barnabas staid there *a whole year*. It was about this time, that Petronius was succeeded as president of Syria by Marsus ; and still we find no trace of the Roman authorities interfering with the Christians at Antioch. The gospel appears at this time to have been particularly flourishing in that city : and it was in some part of the period, which we have been now considering, that the believers came to be known there by the name of Christians. I have already for the sake of convenience anticipated the use of this name ; and we cannot say for certain, what was the appellation generally given to them before this time. It can be proved, that they were sometimes called Galileans and Nazarenes. The latter term was evidently taken from the notion, that Jesus was a native of Nazareth : and St. Matthew was probably thinking of the application of this name to the Christians, when he referred to the prophets, as saying that Christ should be called a Nazarene, i. e. that he and his followers should be marked by opprobrious appellations. The name of Galilean was owing to most, if not all, the apostles being natives of that country : and we can prove that this also would convey unfavourable impressions.

When they are spoken of as the *sect* or *heresy* of the Nazarenes, we need not suppose, that the term *heresy* was intended as a reproach. It is the same term, which Josephus, as well as the sacred writers, uses for the sects of the Pharisees and Sadducees; and merely meant a division or choice of opinions embraced by a certain party. We know that the Gentiles, who never thought or cared much about Jewish matters, for a long time considered the Christians as merely a Jewish sect: and the first believers at Jerusalem would perhaps not have spoken of themselves in any other manner. There is reason to think, that the term *way* was used in a peculiar sense by the Jews, when they wished to speak of the tenets of the Christians: but these different terms, though of common application in Jerusalem and Judæa, had perhaps not found their way to Antioch, where the hostility of the Jews was not so apparent, and where the church had in fact sprung up without the assistance of the Galilæans. St. Luke has not informed us at what time the name of Christian came first into use; and if it was invented after the arrival of Barnabas, it was in the period between the years 41 and 43. It has been argued, that the word *Christianus* is one rather of Latin than of Greek formationⁿ: and if the notion be correct, we must account for it from the prevalence of Roman manners, in consequence of Antioch being the residence of the presidents of Syria.

Saul, as I have stated, came to Antioch about the year 42, and St. Luke speaks of his continuing there a whole year. In the fourth century some caverns were shewn in the neighbourhood of Antioch, in which

ⁿ Witsius, *Melet. Leidens.* III. 4. p. 38.

A. D. 42. it was said that St. Paul had concealed himself°. The tradition, if founded upon facts, would perhaps prove, that the Christians had not been so much unmolested in that city, as I have supposed. But the date of this concealment cannot be ascertained; and such traditions, when unsupported by other and earlier evidence, are scarcely to be trusted as deserving of credit.

A. D. 44. In 44 Saul went up to Jerusalem with contributions for the inhabitants of Judæa, who were suffering from a famine. This famine had been predicted at Antioch some time before by a man named Agabus; and the Christians at Antioch were therefore able to send relief in time, and they made a charitable collection, which was carried to Jerusalem by Barnabas and Saul. They arrived at Jerusalem about the time of the Passover in 44, which was the fourth year of the reign of Claudius: and the state of the church there would forcibly remind Saul of what had happened to himself at his last visit. Ten years had now elapsed since he had left Jerusalem, and the interval had been one of comparative rest to the Christians. The Jews however were now under a king, who might be said to be of their own nation; and they had succeeded in prejudicing him against the Christians. We left Agrippa in Rome at the time of Caligula's death, where he had been endeavouring to get the edict revoked, which had ordered the erection of the emperor's statue in the temple. The death of Caligula saved him any further trouble upon this score: and one of the first acts of the new emperor Claudius was to confirm to Agrippa the territories which he already possessed, with the addition of Judæa, Samaria, and

° Theodoret, *de vitis patrum*, c. 2. p. 782.

A. D.
44.

the district called Abilene: so that the kingdom of Agrippa now included all the countries, which had been reigned over by his grandfather, Herod the Great. He also at the same time procured the small territory of Chalcis, with the title of king, for his brother Herod. This was in some sense and for a few years a restoration of independence to the Jews. Since the removal of Pontius Pilate in 36, they had been governed by the president of Syria, instead of having a procurator of their own^P. They now had once more a king, who had some of the ancient Asmonean blood in his veins, and who upon more than one occasion had shewn himself a real friend to the interests of his nation. He continued the Roman policy of frequently removing the high priests; and his reign, which lasted not quite four years, saw three persons in succession fill that office^Q. By this measure, which might be thought an unpopular one, he was sure to have the person, who actually filled the office, at his command; and the others, who were expecting it, would be careful not to offend him. Agrippa also found it convenient to conciliate his subjects, since he was jealously watched by Marsus the president of Syria: and it was no easy matter for a king of the Jews to be popular with his subjects, and yet to stand well with the Roman authorities in the country. One of the means, which Agrippa took to make himself popular at Jerusalem, was by persecuting the Christians: and since he

^P Josephus speaks of Vitellius sending Marcellus, a friend of his own, to manage the affairs of Judæa, when he ordered Pilate to Rome: (Antiq.

XVIII. 4, 2.) but I do not conceive him to have been procurator.

^Q Simon, Matthias, Elionæus.

A. D.
44.

wished to be accounted particularly strict in his observance of the Law, he would easily be persuaded, that it was his duty to crush this increasing sect. As usual, the Passover was again chosen as the occasion for these acts of cruelty: and the chief civil power being thus gained over, there was less difficulty than ever in carrying on the attack. Agrippa began at once with seizing the ringleaders: and either just before or just after the arrival of Saul and Barnabas, he had publicly beheaded James, who was distinguished from the bishop of Jerusalem, as being the son of Zebedee and the brother of John. We know nothing of his history subsequent to the ascension of Jesus Christ: but he had been particularly favoured by his Master while on earth, and the violent nature of his death seems to have been predicted^r. There can be no doubt, that like the other apostles, he preached in Judæa and Galilee; but there is every reason to think, that his apostolical labours were confined to these countries. The time of his death makes it quite impossible that he should have preached, as one ancient writer^s asserts, to the twelve tribes dispersed throughout the earth: and the assertion was probably made from a mistaken notion, that the general epistle of St. James was written by this apostle. The notion is equally unfounded, that he carried the gospel into Spain; and several writers^t of the Romish church have agreed in demonstrating it to be untrue. It is plain, as I observed before, that at the time of his death the apostles had

^r Matt. xx. 23.

^s Sophronius, who translated Jerom *de viris illustribus*, and made many additions.

^t Baronius once supported

it, but afterwards retracted his opinion. It is opposed by Eustatius (in Rom. xv. 20.) Natalis Alexander (Diss. XIV. Sæc. I.), Tillemont, (Mémoires, tom. I.

confined their journeys to Judæa and Galilee; and James was perhaps just returned from one of these excursions, and intending to keep the Passover at Jerusalem, when he was called to his crown of martyrdom. A tradition existed in the time of Clement of Alexandria^u, that the person, who had assisted in his apprehension, was converted to Christianity, and suffered death at the same time.

A. D.
44.

Agrippa perceived that this act was highly gratifying to the Jews; and he had prepared to please them still more by getting Peter into his power. This distinguished leader of the Christians was kept for a kind of *auto da fê*, which was to be exhibited at the close of the Passover: but a greater than Agrippa, by whom his own days were already numbered, released Peter from his chains, and by a direct interposition from heaven once more set him free. It is painful to read that Agrippa, when he heard of this escape, ordered the keepers of the prison to be put to death: and such a train of deliberate cruelty might prepare us for seeing the hand of Heaven fall heavy on the author of it. Josephus, as well as St. Luke, has told us, that this was remarkably and awfully the case. There is no occasion for me to detail the circumstances of Agrippa's death. He was seized with the illness, which soon carried him off, on the second day of some splendid games which he was celebrating at Cæsarea: and it is not improbable, that the occasion was the birthday of Claudius, which fell on the first of August. He appears to have left Jerusalem soon after Easter: and this would perhaps hinder the chief

p. 1073.), and Pope Innocent I. disbelieved it; (Concil. Lat. vol. II. p. 1245.)

^u Apud Eus. *E. H.* II. 9. Suidas. The Pseudo-Abdias makes many additions.

A. D. 44. priests from continuing their persecution of the Christians.

I have supposed the death of Agrippa to have happened in 44, though good reasons have been advanced for placing it in 43, and this would cause us to antedate the arrival of Barnabas at Antioch by one year. There is also room for doubt, whether the famine had actually begun to be felt in Jerusalem, when he and Saul arrived there with the contributions. It may be collected from other authors, that the famine was severe in the fourth year of Claudius: and at all events the relief which was now brought would soon be extremely seasonable. Relief was also afforded at this or a later period by Helena, who was queen of the people called Adiabeni on the river Tigris. She and her son Izates had embraced the Jewish religion, and caused a large supply of corn and other food to be brought to Jerusalem from Alexandria and Cyprus. The fact, as here stated, rests upon the authority of Josephus^x: and though two later writers^y have asserted, that the journey of Helena and her son to Jerusalem ended in their being converted to Christianity, the story can hardly be received as an authentic part of ecclesiastical history. It would be interesting to suppose, that their conversion was owing to their finding Saul and Barnabas engaged in the same charitable undertaking with themselves.

It has been thought, that none of the apostles were now at Jerusalem, because the money is said to have been sent, not to them, but to the elders. This, however, is to assume, that the Christians at Antioch had such accurate information, as to know, that when Saul

^x Antiq. XX. 2. ^y Orosius, VII. 6. Ado Vienn. Chron.

and Barnabas arrived at Jerusalem, they would find all the apostles absent : a fact, which the distance between the two cities makes extremely improbable : and if Agrippa had not killed James and imprisoned Peter, it is certain, that the money might have been received by these two apostles. The fact, however, is, as I have already observed, that the apostles had long ago given up all management of such contributions : the deacons were the proper persons to receive them ; and I have supposed, that when the apostles began to be often absent from Jerusalem, they gave to some of the deacons the name of *elders*, and invested them with authority over the rest. The elders therefore were the proper persons, to whom the collection from Antioch was sent : they would see that the deacons distributed it properly : and we cannot argue from this expression, whether any of the apostles were at this time in Jerusalem or no. We may observe, however, that when St. Peter was miraculously released from prison, he gave directions that James should be informed of it ; which not only shews that James was now in Jerusalem, but confirms the notion of his filling some important station. St. Peter, as might be expected, did not run the risk of staying at present in the city. St. Luke says, that *he went to another place*, but he does not specify the name. The notion of his going now to Antioch, and presiding over the church there, which has been advanced by some Roman Catholic writers, need only be stated to be exposed. The same may be said of his journey to Rome : and the whole history of St. Peter, before and after this period, except what is recorded in the Acts, is involved in inconsistencies and fable. According to some

A. D. 44.

writers^z, he had preached in several parts of Asia Minor and at Rome before his imprisonment at Jerusalem in the year 44: but all evidence is against such a notion; and though there is no reason, why he might not have undertaken a longer journey after his imprisonment, I should rather infer that he merely commenced another of those evangelical circuits, which I have already so often spoken of: and that is the reason why St. Luke does not mention any particular place, to which he went. It is probable, that Saul and Barnabas returned to Antioch soon after Easter: at least they returned, *when they had finished their ministry*: and since they were to deliver the money to the elders, there was no occasion for them to stay there a long time themselves. They took with them John, who was surnamed Mark: and though the question will perhaps never be decided, I cannot help agreeing with those persons, who think that this was not Mark the Evangelist. It was to his mother's house, that St. Peter is stated to have gone, as soon as he was released from prison. This house appears to have been one of the places, where the Christians met for the purpose of prayer: and though we know nothing of Mark's previous history, we can hardly doubt but that he was an early convert to the gospel. What we know for certain is, that he was son to the sister of Barnabas, which will account for his now accompanying his uncle to Antioch: and perhaps we may conclude, that he was considerably younger in age.

We are not told how long Saul and Barnabas continued at Antioch, before they commenced their first apostolic journey. They perhaps arrived there

^z See Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. I. p. 451.

from Jerusalem after Pentecost in the year 44: and St. Luke's narrative might rather lead us to conclude, that they did not leave it till the following year. The expression, which he uses, is very remarkable; and shews how direct and immediate was the interference of God in providing for the spreading of the gospel. Saul, as I have already stated, must long have known, that he was destined to carry the name of Jesus into distant countries: it is probable also, that Barnabas had received a similar intimation; and though they had now waited twelve years for their final instructions, they do not seem to have thought of commencing their labours, till the actual time was signified to them from heaven. There might be room for much serious speculation, if we were to consider why the further propagation of the gospel was delayed to so long a period. But in questions of this kind, where the first principles of our knowledge must be drawn from Revelation, it is sufficient to know what God *has* done, and the deepest reasoner will never be able to demonstrate *why* he did so. It is undoubted, that the labours of the apostles, for about twelve years after the ascension of their Lord, were confined to Palestine. Salvation through Christ was offered first to the Jews: not that the Gentiles would have been excluded, if the Jews had accepted the offer: nor can we suppose, that this preference was shewn to the latter, merely because they had of old been God's chosen people. God doubtless had wise reasons for laying the foundations of the gospel in Palestine, and for not extending it to other countries, till it was firmly established in Judæa. If we could dive into the Divine counsels, we should see, that the time did not

A. D.
44.

arrive earlier for the Gentiles to be converted: we should see, that if the apostles had left the Jews to their prejudices, and gone at once into distant countries, their success would not have been the same. We may not at present see the reason of this, and human wisdom might have expected a different course: but when the conclusions of reason are different from the ways of Providence, we want no further argument to tell us, that reason was wrong, but that the counsels of God must be right. A tradition has been preserved by two early writers, that the apostles had been told by their master not to leave Jerusalem for twelve years^a. If we substitute Judæa for Jerusalem, and take Judæa in its widest sense, as including Samaria and Galilee, the tradition is not at variance with what we know from history. There is every reason to think, that at the time of Saul and Barnabas going to Jerusalem in 44, (which coincides with the death of Herod Agrippa, and with the fourth year of the reign of Claudius,) none of the apostles had passed the limits of what might properly be called their own country. I have supposed it to be in the following year, that the Holy Ghost said to the Christians at Antioch, *Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them*: and perhaps at the same time it was signified to the other apostles, that the period was come for their more distant labours. We shall see, however, that some of the apostles still continued in Judæa: at least they were in the habit of visiting it at intervals; and though the Gentiles were now to profit by their preaching, the churches of Palestine would still require some of their attention.

^a Clem. Alex. *Strom.* VI. 5. p. 762. Eus. *H. E.* V. 18.

Saul and Barnabas probably set out on their first journey in the spring or summer of 45: and we might have expected, that Saul's first care would have been to visit his countrymen in Cilicia, more especially as it lay on his way to the places where he ultimately preached. He however went by sea, and made first for Cyprus, leaving Cilicia unvisited; which confirms me in the notion, that he had previously planted the gospel in that country: and this will be still more apparent, when we read, that he commenced his second journey by *confirming the churches in Syria and Cilicia*; an expression, which implies, that this was not the first time of his visiting them. It was perhaps at the suggestion of Barnabas, who was a native of Cyprus, that they commenced their labours in that island; and since we have seen that the gospel had been preached there soon after the death of Stephen, we may suppose that the way was partly prepared for them. This remark, however, will not extend to the tradition of Lazarus having gone to Cyprus after the martyrdom of Stephen, and having been bishop of the church at Cytæum for thirty years^b. The most extraordinary circumstance in the visit of Saul and Barnabas to this island was the conversion of Sergius Paulus the proconsul, who perhaps might be thought from the narrative to have heard something of Christianity before; and if he had been long in

^b Epiphanius has however preserved a tradition of Lazarus having lived thirty years after his resurrection: (Hær. LXVI. 34. p. 652.) but he says nothing of his residence in Cyprus, though he was likely to

have heard of it, having been himself the metropolitan bishop in that island. See Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. II. p. 59. Natalis Alexander, Sæc. I. Diss. XVI. p. 608.

A. D.
45.

the island, it could hardly have been otherwise. It also cannot be doubted, that the proconsul was baptized: and his name therefore deserves to be recorded, as the first idolatrous Gentile who was admitted to the gospel. He was at least the first of whom we have any account. It is possible, that similar cases may have occurred at Antioch; but the evidence is rather against it: and I have already observed, that the case of Cornelius, and persons like him, who already believed in the true God, did not go the whole length in establishing the admission of Gentiles. Concerning the subsequent history of Sergius Paulus we know nothing authentic. If he continued in the island, he had the opportunity of seeing Barnabas again in the following year: but we have no account of St. Paul having ever again visited Cyprus: and the story of his taking Sergius with him, when he went several years after to Spain, and appointing him bishop of Narbonne, is entitled to no credit^c.

The great principle of admitting even idolatrous Gentiles was practically settled by Saul and Barnabas on their present journey. From Cyprus they went to Pamphylia, where for some reason, which is not mentioned, Mark left them; and from thence they went to Antioch in Pisidia^d. It was here, that they formally announced to the Jews, that the gospel, which was rejected by themselves, would hence-

^c Ado, *de festiv. Apost.* ad xi. Cal. April. Bolland. ad 22 Mart. p. 371.

^d Whoever wishes to read an account of St. Thecla, who is said to have been converted by St. Paul at Iconium, may con-

sult Natalis Alexander, (*Sæc. I. Synops. c. X. art. 2.*) Tillemont, (*Mémoires*, tom. II. p. 107.)

I feel compelled to omit all mention of this fabulous though celebrated saint.

forth be preached to the Gentiles; and many of the latter immediately embraced it. It was on this journey, that Saul appears first to have adopted the name of Paul, by which we may in future designate him. The custom seems to have been common for Jews to have Roman or Grecian names as well as their own; and we need not seek any other reason for Saul, who was henceforth to be a preacher among the Gentiles, adopting a name with which his hearers would be more familiar^e. While they were traversing Lycaonia, his life would have been destroyed at Lystra by stoning, if he had not miraculously recovered: and this, as well as all the opposition, which they met with on their journey, seems to have been excited in the first instance by the Jews. On this occasion Pamphylia and Pisidia were the limits of their journey to the west: unless we suppose, with some writers^f, that they made excursions as far as Phrygia and Galatia. This, however, seems not probable: and I should rather conclude, that neither of those two countries was visited by St. Paul till the following year. The two apostles appear now to have visited most of the towns a second time: a measure, which would enable them to form a judgment of the characters of their converts: and we find, that in every place they appointed elders; by which we are to understand, that they followed the plan of the churches in Judæa, and placed the deacons under the authority of one or more of their number, who were entrusted with the superintendence of the whole body. In many of these infant churches one elder would be sufficient: where more were wanted, they

^e See Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. I. 789.

^f Macknight. Pref. to Gal.

A. D.
45.

probably placed the chief authority in the hands of one, whose office approached more nearly to that of bishop, though his district was confined to a single town. We know, that this was the practice of St. Paul a few years later ; and a simpler arrangement could not have been devised, or one which was more likely to ensure the prosperity of the churches. The expression used by St. Luke seems to imply, that these elders were not simply appointed by Paul and Barnabas, but that they were chosen by general suffrage. We have seen, that some selection of this kind was made in the case of Matthias. The seven deacons also were chosen by the whole body of believers at the suggestion of the apostles : and this was probably the method pursued in all appointments of this kind. The word here used would literally imply *a shew of hands* : and whether this was the mode of election or no, we may conclude that Paul and Barnabas called upon the believers to recommend some of their number for the office of elder ; and the persons thus recommended were instructed in their duties, and had the care of the church committed to them, by Paul and Barnabas. The two apostles having thus once more passed through Pisidia and Pamphylia, embarked at Attalia, and returned to Antioch, from whence they had set out. The whole journey could easily have been performed before the winter.

As soon as they arrived at Antioch, they made known to their brethren the result of their missionary labours ; and the words of St. Luke seem clearly to shew, that they had gone further in converting the Gentiles, than what had been practised before. He says, that they gave an account of what God had

done by their hands, and *how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles*. This door therefore had not been open to the Gentiles before; and yet some years had elapsed since the conversion of Cornelius. I have also stated, that the church of Antioch appears certainly to have consisted of Gentiles as well as Jews: and yet Paul and Barnabas speak of the door of faith being opened now, as for the first time, to the Gentiles. I have already partly anticipated the solution of this difficulty. Cornelius was a Gentile, but he had learnt from the Jews to worship the true God. At the time of his conversion he was not an idolater; and I should conclude the same of all the Gentile converts at Antioch. The Gentiles converted by Paul and Barnabas on this journey, were of a very different kind. They were turned immediately from idols and the grossest superstitions to worship the one God, and to believe in his Son's resurrection. This was the final extension of the gospel. It was a step, which the apostles certainly did not contemplate at the time of their Lord's ascension: and a less space of time than that which had elapsed, would perhaps not have been sufficient to make them acquiesce in it. We shall soon see, that many even now were not prepared to go the whole length.

A. D.
45.

A report of what had been done, was probably conveyed speedily to Jerusalem^h; and the result was, that some persons went down from thence to Antioch, and asserted that the Gentile converts ought

^h Tillemont, who supposes five years to have elapsed between the return of Paul and Barnabas and the council of Jerusalem, makes them to have

travelled in the interval as far as Illyria. (Mém. tom. I. p. 551.) But the notion is utterly untenable.

A. D.
46.

to be circumcised, and to conform in all things to the Law of Mosesⁱ. It is plain from the sequel, that these persons were not authorized to deliver such a doctrine: nor does it appear, that they found many who supported it in Antioch. The Gentile converts of every kind would naturally oppose it, and they formed a strong party. Paul and Barnabas also argued against the proposition: and it was considered so important to set this great question finally at rest, that a deputation was sent to Jerusalem. Paul and Barnabas were at the head of this embassy: the former indeed appears, as before, to have been directed to take this step by special revelation: and among other persons they were accompanied by Titus, who is mentioned now for the first time. He was himself much interested in this question, being a Gentile^k, and, as is generally supposed, a native of Antioch. There is no doubt, that he was converted by St. Paul^l. Their route lay through Phœnicia and Samaria, and they took care to inform the Christians, as they passed, that the Gentiles had been converted. St. Luke adds, that the announcement caused great delight, which was not unnatural in those two countries: but we are not told whether they spoke as openly to the Christians of Judæa and Galilee. It is probable, that they did not stop long in any place: and their instructions were to confer with the church at Jerusalem, which consisted always of James and the elders, and with any of the apostles who might be at Jerusalem. It is certain, that all the apostles had not yet begun their more distant

ⁱ Epiphanius is the earliest writer, who says that Cerinthus was one of these persons. Hær. XXVIII. 4. p. 112.

^k Gal. ii. 3.

^l Titus i. 4.

journeys: Peter and John are mentioned by name as being at Jerusalem^m; and it is not unlikely that some more of them were there. The Christians appear at this time to have been unmolested: and perhaps the death of Herod Agrippa was a favourable circumstance. His son Agrippa being then only seventeen years old, Judæa was again governed by a Roman procuratorⁿ. The first was Cuspius Fadus, who contrived to make himself very unpopular with the Jewish authorities, and he only held his office one year. His successor in 45 was Tiberius Alexander, who was nephew to Philo Judæus, the celebrated Alexandrian writer; but he had apostatized from his religion, and on that account must have been very unpopular with the Jews. We may conclude it to have been a measure of policy, rather than any regard for Jewish feelings, which led the emperor to take from these procurators the superintendence of the temple, and the power of appointing the high priests, and to confer them upon Herod, whom he had lately made king of Chalcis. This power was not again exercised by the Roman authorities till the destruction of the city. It was perhaps owing to the unpopularity of these two procurators, that the country swarmed with impostors. Opposition to the Roman tribute had long been a watchword to persons such as these: and there was generally a mixture of religious with political excitement. Theudas was beheaded by Cuspius Fadus for an offence of this kind; and Tiberius Alexander crucified James and Simon, who endeavoured to revive the party of their father Judas the Galilæan.

A. D.
46.

^m Gal. ii. 9.

ⁿ Joseph. *Antiq.* XIX. ult. XX. 1.

A. D.
46.

The country was, in this state, when Paul and Barnabas arrived at Jerusalem in the year 46: and we may suppose, that the high priests were not likely to have much influence with the Roman authorities. It is indeed highly creditable to the Christians, that they were not noticed by such men as Fadus and Alexander. A Roman officer might easily have been persuaded to identify Jesus with the impostors Theudas and Judas: but we read of nothing of this kind: and the manner in which the Christians met to discuss this great question, would seem to argue a period of tranquillity.

The deputation from Antioch was received by the church at large: but the conversion of the Gentiles appears not to have been fully explained at the first meeting. Paul took an opportunity of disclosing it to the apostles; and this is another proof, that idolatrous Gentiles had only lately been admitted. The question, however, soon came to be agitated; and some, who before their conversion had been Pharisees, did not scruple to maintain, that the whole of the Mosaic Law was of universal obligation. The fact of Titus being come with the party from Antioch, and of his not being circumcised, was soon discovered. It might be thought perhaps from St. Paul's own words, that some persons pretended to be Christians, and having learnt what was the case with Titus, proposed this question for discussion, in order to sow divisions among the Christians: and it was strongly urged by many, that Titus ought to conform to the Law. Paul, however, stood firm, and resisted the demand. The apostles also and James appear to have been convinced by his reasoning: though this rather shews, that up to this time the

apostles themselves had not sanctioned the admission of idolatrous Gentiles. A general meeting was now called, at which James, the two apostles, and the elders were present: it is probable also, that other believers were admitted. The question to be discussed was whether the Gentile converts were to be circumcised: at least this was the original cause of dispute: but the matter had now been brought to a still more general issue; and it was contended on one side, that the whole Law of Moses was binding upon all. The decree of this council becomes much more intelligible, if it is considered as bearing upon the greater as well as upon the lesser of these two questions. The business was opened by Peter, who spoke strongly in favour of not laying this burden upon the Gentile converts. Paul and Barnabas then gave the same account of their proceedings to the whole meeting, which they had given before to the apostles in private: and they were able to use the same argument, which had been employed so unanswerably by Peter, that God had sanctioned their admission of the Gentiles by enabling them to work miracles: lastly, James in the name of the whole meeting delivered the decree, which is another proof of the authority which he possessed in the church at Jerusalem even in the presence of apostles. With respect to the question which had been first started, but which had now been made a branch of the greater question, the Gentile converts were released altogether from the necessity of circumcision: and this in fact was equivalent to deciding, that the Law of Moses was not of universal obligation. Still, however, it remained to be considered, whether there were not some parts of it, which ought to be en-

A. D.
46.

forced : and this question could only affect such of its enactments as were arbitrary and positive : for concerning the moral precepts of the Law, those which are of eternal obligation, and written as it were upon the heart, concerning these, there was no dispute between Jews and Gentiles. There was only one obligation of a moral kind, which required to be mentioned. The violation of chastity, which was strictly forbidden by the Jewish Law, was not looked upon as a crime by the heathen, except so far as it interfered with any social rights. This therefore was mentioned in the decree which was delivered by James : and the observations now made may explain why the sin of fornication is forbidden in the same decree, which prohibited other matters of a purely arbitrary nature. Some few instances of this kind were selected out of regard to the prejudices and customs of the Jews. Wherever there was a congregation of Christians, Jews and Gentiles were living closely in contact. As James observed in his speech, *the Law of Moses was read in the synagogues every sabbath* ; and this law prohibited some things which were harmless in themselves, but which were matters of perfect abhorrence to the Jews. Such was the eating any thing that was killed with the blood in it, or any thing which was sold for food after having been offered to an idol ; concerning neither of which things did the Gentile converts feel any scruple. It is probable, that many Jews had complained of their feelings being hurt by the Gentiles in these particulars : and the council at Jerusalem now strongly urged the Gentile Christians to pay regard to the usages of the Jews. The two cases mentioned above were likely often to occur,

when Jews and Gentiles met at any meal; and the council was anxious to prevent disagreements of this kind. The decree therefore may be regarded as absolving the Gentile converts from all obligation to the Law of Moses, as an imperative law. The sinfulness of fornication was antecedent to the delivery of the Law by Moses: and it would not have been specified now, if the Gentiles had not ceased to look upon it as sinful. The other prohibitions regarded things which were in their nature indifferent: and abstinence from which laid little or no burden upon the Gentiles. The decree was in every sense one of conciliation and peace: and though some of the more rigid Jews were still dissatisfied, it set at rest a most important question, and was highly gratifying to a large body of believers. There is evidence, that as late as the end of the third century^o, some Christians considered themselves bound by this decree: which is one proof, among many, of the strong hold which positive ordinances take upon the mind, even after the cause which imposed them has ceased to operate. There is no doubt, that Christians of every age are bound not to offer wilful violence to the scruples of any of their brethren. The language of St. Paul upon this point is plain and unequivocal: but he never for a moment deceived his converts as to the things prohibited in this decree being in themselves indifferent. If we were brought into daily contact with Jews, as the first Gentile converts were, we should find it highly expedient to observe this decree. We should observe it as grounded upon

^o See Clem. Alex. *Pæd.* III. Origen. *cont. Celsum*, VIII. 30.
3. p. 267. Tertull. *Apol.* 10. p. 763. See Natalis Alexander,
p. 10. Minucius Felix, p. 300. Diss. IX. Sæc. 1.

A. D. the common principles of Christian charity : but an
46. observance of it upon any other principle is unreasonable, and borders upon superstition.

The decree was addressed to the Gentile converts of Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia : which clearly proves a close connexion between the Syrian and Cilician churches ; and is another confirmation of what I have conjectured, that St. Paul had preached the gospel in Cilicia before his being brought to Antioch by Barnabas in 42. That he should keep up a connexion between the churches in his own country and in Antioch, after his arrival at the latter city, was perfectly natural : and it is probable, that he was commissioned to express the wishes of the Gentile converts in Cilicia, when he went to Jerusalem. Before he returned to Antioch, he appears to have come to a full understanding with the apostles who were present. Peter and John acknowledged him to be an apostle like themselves ; and it was agreed, that while they devoted themselves more especially to the Jews, St. Paul should labour in the conversion of the Gentiles. They were now to part, and enter upon their respective duties ; and St. Paul promised not to forget the temporal wants of the brethren, whom he was leaving, but to urge his Gentile converts to make collections for the Christians in Judæa. The famine, which had been felt two years before, and which continued more or less throughout the reign of Claudius, made this promise very acceptable : and the whole of this important matter being thus amicably settled, Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch with the decree ; and Judas and Silas, who were distinguished in the church at Jerusalem, were commissioned to accompany them.

LECTURE VI.

THE nature of the business, which had led Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem, would make them anxious to return as soon as it was settled. The decree of the council, as might be expected, gave great joy to the Gentile converts: and it might be thought, that the question concerning the Law of Moses was set entirely at rest. This, however, was not the case. It is probable that St. Peter arrived at Antioch shortly after: and this is the first time, that we read of his taking any journey, except in Judæa, Samaria, or Galilee. I have conjectured, that about the time of St. Paul going on his first mission, the other apostles also began to visit more distant countries. St. Peter was perhaps on his way to some other place, when he came to Antioch: and it was natural for him to wish to see a church, which was so flourishing. The Roman Catholics, as I have already observed, would wish to make out, that St. Peter was bishop of Antioch: but the notion is contrary to all evidence; and nothing is more certain, than that the church at Antioch was wholly independent of the church at Jerusalem; that it flourished for some years without being visited by any apostle; and that we have no account of St. Peter ever residing there for any length of time.

A. D.
46.

I have supposed, that he visited Antioch some time in the year 46: and at first he associated in-

A. D.
46.

differently with Jews or Gentiles, making no distinction between them^a. There seems, however, in the course of this year to have been a more than usual communication between Jerusalem and Antioch. Perhaps the unsettled state of Judæa, and the constant riots which had already begun as prelude to the approaching war, induced some of the Christians to look for a safer residence. A party from Jerusalem followed Peter to Antioch: and though St. Paul speaks of them as *coming from James*^b, he must either mean merely, that they belonged to the church at Jerusalem, of which James was the head; or that they pretended to be following his instructions. Their conduct shews, that James could not really have authorized their proceedings: for they attempted to revive the former prejudice, that a Jew must not eat with a Gentile. It does not appear, that they wished to dispute the decree of the council, or tried once more to bind the Gentile converts to the Law of Moses: but they pretended that this Law prohibited themselves from eating with Gentiles: which clearly shews the wisdom and the charity of this decree, in compliance with which the Gentiles were to avoid giving any offence to the Jews in their peculiar customs. If we could think, that the Gentile converts disregarded the decree, and offended the Jews in the article of food, the conduct of the seceding party might be excused: but nothing of this is said; and St. Paul would not have felt so warmly, if the Gentiles had been to blame. The most surprising part of this transaction is, that St. Peter himself was persuaded to return once more to his former prejudices: and it

^a Gal. ii. 11.

^b Gal. ii. 12.

is scarcely less strange, that Barnabas also did the same, though he had assisted St. Paul in opening the door of faith to the Gentiles on his first journey. I would again repeat, that it is not said, that Peter and Barnabas and the other Jews attempted to revive the notion, that the Gentile converts must conform to the Law: they only declined joining them in their meals: and it was for this, that St. Peter received a public rebuke from St. Paul^c. The step, which was taken by these Judaizing Christians, was certainly uncalled for, and might lead to some fundamental errors. It was uncalled for, because the decree of the council would provide against the Gentiles giving any offence to the Jews at their meals; and the censure delivered by St. Paul points out the danger of the Jews trusting to these legal ceremonies, as if they had any merit to remit sin. This was the consequence, which was foreseen and dreaded by St. Paul: his own enlightened mind already saw in its full extent the perfect equality between Jew and Gentile, and the utter indifference of the Mosaic ordinances. He himself still conformed to them, when by not doing so he would have offended the Jews: but he rebuked even the two apostles, Peter and Barnabas, when he thought that their conduct endangered the doctrine of justification by faith.

We are not told, what length of time elapsed, before St. Paul undertook his second journey. It is probable, however, that it was not long; and I

A. D.
46.

^c Some persons have wished to argue, that the person rebuked by St. Paul was not St. Peter, but another disciple, named Cephas. Others have followed Jerom, and contend-

ed, that St. Paul merely pretended to rebuke St. Peter. But see Natalis Alexander *Diss.* X. Sæc. I. Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. I. p. 467.

A. D.
46.

should suppose him to have commenced it in the summer of the same year 46. The churches, which he had planted in Pisidia and Lycaonia in the preceding year, must often have occupied his mind : and he now proposed to Barnabas, that they should go and visit them. Barnabas was as anxious as St. Paul to undertake the journey : but he proposed, that his nephew Mark should again accompany them : and this proposal was the cause of a separation between himself and Paul. We are not told what was the reason of Mark having left the two apostles on their former journey : but it is plain, that his conduct was not approved by St. Paul. We can hardly think, that it was a want of zeal : for then he would not have returned to Jerusalem, where the Christians were always in most danger, and where James had been put to death, and Peter imprisoned, not long before. Barnabas also would not have taken him as a companion, if he had found him to be deficient in courage or in zeal. It is possible, that he felt strongly concerning the necessity of Gentile converts conforming to the Law. Having lived with Peter at Jerusalem, he might have imbibed prejudices upon that point : and it is perhaps remarkable, that he quitted the two apostles upon their journey just after the conversion of Sergius Paulus, which, as I then observed, was the first instance of an idolatrous Gentile embracing the gospel. It is possible, that Mark may have had doubts concerning the propriety of this act : and since we read of his returning to Jerusalem, he may have gone thither to refer the matter to Peter. His doubts, if they existed, would have been removed by the decree of the council : and since we read of his being

shortly afterwards at Antioch, he may either have accompanied Paul and Barnabas thither, when they carried back the decree; or he may have been one of the persons who went afterwards with Peter. In either case it is probable that he joined Peter and Barnabas in that ill-advised secession from the Gentile converts, which was censured by St. Paul: and this, as I said before, may have been partly the reason, why St. Paul did not wish to be accompanied by Mark on his second journey.

A. D.
46.

The dispute, which ensued between Paul and Barnabas, may give rise to painful reflections, but it was the cause of the gospel being more rapidly and widely spread. The two apostles now travelled in different directions: and the division of labour, as is generally the case, was beneficial to the object which they had in view. Barnabas again shewed his affection for his native country by going to Cyprus; and this perhaps may be said to be the last event in his life, which we can state with certainty. We know nothing of the time which he passed in the island, nor of the success which he met with. It is probable, however, that he preached in many other countries; and St. Paul himself seems to inform us, that he was alive in the year 52, and was then actively engaged in preaching the gospel^d. There are traditionary accounts, which connect him with the foundation of the church of Milan^e; and there is perhaps nothing improbable in supposing him to have visited that part of Italy: but the evidence is only of a late and suspicious character; nor are there

^d 1 Cor. ix. 6.

^e See Baronius, ad an. LI. No. 54. Tillemont, *Mémoires*,

tom. I. p. 1191. Sormani, *Origine Apostolica della chiesa Milanese*.

A. D.
46.

any stronger grounds for believing him to have been stoned to death at Salamis in Cyprus by the unbelieving Jews^f. The time and manner of his death must be considered wholly uncertain: though if he was the author of the Epistle, which still bears his name, there would be reason to think, that he survived the destruction of Jerusalem. This Epistle has been ascribed to him by some ancient and modern writers: but upon the whole I cannot help agreeing with those persons who think it a later composition, though it certainly existed in the second century; and no authentic work can be said to exist of the apostle Barnabas. St. Paul found another zealous companion in Silas, or Silvanus, who had accompanied himself and Barnabas on their return from Jerusalem. Silas is spoken of as having filled a high station in the church at Jerusalem. He had probably been a deacon, and then raised to the office of presbyter. St. Luke also speaks of him as *a prophet*; by which we are to understand, that in the distribution of the miraculous gifts of the Spirit he received the power of interpreting scripture. The great scheme of Christianity had been successively unfolded in the Old Testament: but the revelation was often couched in dark and enigmatical expressions. There were many of these sayings, which even the apostles did not understand, till their minds were specially enlightened: and they were now able not only to see through these mysteries themselves, but by laying their hands on their converts, they could impart to them also the possession of this preternatural knowledge. This

^f Alexander Monachus apud Surium XI Jun. p. 172. §. 19. of his remains being found in Cyprus, II. 2. p. 571.
—21. Theodorus Lector speaks

gift was called *prophecy*, the right interpretation of the ancient prophecies being the principal part of it: and the same Spirit, who had wrapped the divine revelations in their designed obscurity, now furnished the means of removing the mysterious veil ^g. Silvanus was one of these prophets; and from this period we shall find him a frequent and favourite companion of St. Paul.

A. D.
46.

The great apostle now commenced his journey by land, and took the route, which we might have expected him to have followed on the former occasion. He travelled through Syria and Cilicia; and the expression used by St. Luke of his *confirming the churches* in those countries, proves, as I before observed, that he must have planted these churches at an earlier period. He now confirmed them: i. e. he gave them such regulations as were necessary for their welfare. Wherever deacons were wanted, he ordained them; he appointed others to the office of elders: and there can be little doubt, that to some or all of these ministers he imparted those miraculous gifts of the Spirit, which were so useful for the instruction of the converts, and furnished such convincing evidence of the gospel.

Having passed through Cilicia, St. Paul entered the country, which he had traversed in the year preceding, and the churches in Lycaonia and Pisidia appear to have been extremely flourishing. In the town of Derbe or Lystra he met with Timothy, who had either been converted by himself and Barnabas on the former visit, or he had embraced the gospel in the interval. On his mother's side he was

^g See Mosheim's Dissertation, *De illis qui Prophetae vocantur in novo fœdere*, Syntagm.

Diss. ad Hist. Eccl. pertinentium.

A. D. 46. of Jewish descent, and it was probably by her means that he became a Christian. Eunice, and her own mother Lois, appear to have been converted, when St. Paul first visited Derbe : and we have St. Paul's own testimony, that Eunice had instructed her son in the Jewish scriptures from his childhood ^h. The father of Timothy was a Gentile : and though nothing more is said of him, we may conclude, that he worshipped the true God, and adopted the religion of his wife, though he did not comply with the burdensome ceremonies of the Law. On the same principle his son Timothy had not been circumcised : and we know, that this was no objection in the opinion of St. Paul to his embracing the gospel. It is singular, however, that St. Paul now made him undergo this ceremony : and it is the more remarkable, because at this very time he was the bearer of the apostolical decree, which released the Gentile converts from the necessity of circumcision. This apparent inconsistency is easily explained. If Timothy had remained at Derbe, he would not have been circumcised : but he was henceforward to accompany St. Paul, and assist him in propagating the gospel. The apostle was aware, that the Jews would never consent to be instructed by one who was uncircumcised. The Gentiles had no objection to the preaching of a Jew : and therefore the circumcision of Timothy, which was a matter of indifference with respect to the Gentiles, was indispensable in the conversion of the Jews. St. Paul therefore ordered it to be performed. When the circumcision of Titus was demanded, as essential to his own salvation, St. Paul persevered in resisting it : so also he

^h 2 Tim. i. 5. iii. 15.

admitted Timothy into the church without his being circumcised: but when he saw, that by submitting to this ceremony, he might be made the instrument of converting the Jews, he immediately had him circumcised. It was a measure of expediency, and perfectly in accordance with St. Paul's principle of observing or abstaining from things indifferent, according as the example was likely to do good or harm. The decree of the council was not at variance with this principle. It exhorted the Gentile converts to abstain from certain things, which were offensive to the Jews. St. Paul also knew, that the Jews would take offence, if an uncircumcised person preached to them about salvation. He therefore had him circumcised: not as if this act conveyed any spiritual benefit to Timothy; but it enabled him to labour more successfully in the cause of the gospel.

A. D.
46.

Timothy now accompanied Paul and Silvanus. Having visited the churches, which had been planted the year before in that part of the country, they proceeded to the north-west, and traversed Phrygia and Galatia. The latter country was inhabited by a tribe of Gauls, who left their homes about the year 278 B. C., and passing through Thrace crossed the Bosphorus, and assisted Nicomedes, king of Bithynia, against his brother Zybætas: for which service they were rewarded with a territory in the interior of Asia Minor, and gave to it the name of Gallo-Græcia, or Galatia¹. From their first settlement there to the period of their being visited by St. Paul, was an interval of more than 300 years: and if Jerom is correct, they had still retained their old Celtic language; for he speaks of their using it in his own

¹ Liv. XXXVIII. 16.

A. D.
46.

day, when 300 more years had passed away. We must infer however from the Epistle addressed to them by St. Paul, (and the name of Gallo-Græcia might lead us to the same conclusion,) that the more polished language of Greece had been generally adopted by the barbarian settlers; and the population was perhaps at this time composed of a mixed race. Both in Phrygia and Galatia St. Paul appears to have met with great success: and the churches of Laodicea, Colossæ, and Hierapolis, which we shall have occasion to notice hereafter, were perhaps planted by him during this journey through Phrygia^k. The principal cities of Galatia were Ancyra, Pessinus, and Tavium, whose names are not connected with early ecclesiastical history: but we know, that many converts were made throughout the country. St. Paul himself speaks of the eagerness, with which the Galatians listened to his preaching^l: and though the fact hardly requires proof in any particular instance, we have his own testimony, that his success in Galatia was furthered by the working of miracles^m. This is a fact, which is never to be lost sight of in the history of the apostles. It is not incorrect to say, that miracles form part of the ordinary narrative: and we can only account for the gospel spreading through whole districts in such short periods, by remembering that the new doctrine was preached by men, who proved by miracles, that God was with them.

When St. Paul and his company reached the

^k This was the opinion of Theodoret, p. 343: but others have thought that St. Paul never personally visited Laodicea, or Colossæ. See Estius

in Col. ii. 1. Usher, *Annal.* ad an. 64. p. 680. Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. I. p. 564, 859.

^l Gal. iv. 15.

^m iii. 5.

western boundary of Galatia, where it borders upon Mysia, they were uncertain as to the direction in which they were to proceed. They had hitherto been in countries, which, though subject to the Roman empire, were for the most part called barbarous, and where Grecian civilization had made little progress. As they approached the coast, they would meet with people of a more polished character. If they turned to the south, they entered Ionia; and Ephesus, which was the capital, and the seat of the Roman proconsul, could not fail to be an interesting field. If they went to the north, they would traverse Bithynia, which still contained traces of the wealth and munificence of the kings of Pergamus. It would seem, however, that neither of these countries was as yet prepared to receive the gospel. The reason is not assigned; but St. Paul was hindered by a special revelation from entering either country. He then travelled through Mysia, and reached the sea-coast at Troas, where he received a still plainer and more definite revelation, ordering him to cross over to Macedonia. It is generally supposed, that St. Luke joined St. Paul for the first time at Troas; and there can be no doubt, that he accompanied him from thence. We know nothing of the reason, which had brought him to Troas, nor of the length of time which he had passed there. I have conjectured, that he was a member of the church of Antioch, and that he passed some years in that city after his conversion. He probably left it before St. Paul, and apparently soon after the arrival of the apostolical decree; which may account for his saying nothing of St. Peter's visit to Antioch. If he arrived at Troas before St. Paul, he probably reached

A. D. 46. it by sea : at least there is reason to think, that no person had anticipated St. Paul in preaching the gospel in the countries through which he passed : and St. Luke would have been likely to do this, if he had already travelled in the same line. From this time it is plain, that he assisted St. Paul in preaching the gospel. It might be supposed, that he had already been so employed at Antioch : and whatever was the mark or token of an evangelist, it was henceforward to be found in St. Luke. The very notion of his being a companion of Paul and Silas, and cooperating with them in preaching the gospel, implies that he had received the miraculous gifts of the Spirit. Whatever was wanting from human instruction, he would receive from St. Paul : and his subsequent history will shew, that he was one of the ablest, as well as most zealous, supporters of the Christian cause.

St. Paul and his two companions lost no time in crossing over to Macedonia, and the first place of importance, in which they stopped, was Philippi. The Jews here do not seem to have been numerous : at least they had no synagogue in the town ; and we now meet with the first instance of the heathen authorities offering any serious opposition to the gospel. The duumviri of Philippi did not however know much of the opinions which they persecuted : and their conduct will perhaps illustrate some of the later acts of violence which the gospel encountered. The apostles were brought before them by some persons who had made money by divination ; and a young woman had been employed by them, who was under the influence of an evil spirit. Paul having exorcised this evil spirit, and

restored the woman to her right mind, she was no longer able to act the part of a prophetess, and gain money for her employers. This made these persons feel great ill-will against Paul: and we shall frequently see hereafter, that the enemies of the gospel were excited by the diminution or loss of some profitable trade. In the present case Paul and Silvanus were brought before the magistrates, and accused of disturbing the city by introducing customs, which the inhabitants, as Romans, could not receive. It was added, that they were Jews: a charge, which in the present instance was true, and would of itself exhibit them in an unfavourable light: but we shall also see, that many of the future sufferings of the Christians were owing to their being confounded with the Jews. There can be little doubt, that these accusers of Paul and Silvanus alluded to their having preached against heathen idolatry: and to decry the established religion, or to introduce a new one, was, as these persons justly observed, prohibited by the Roman laws. There cannot be a greater misrepresentation, than to describe the religion of Rome as a tolerant religion; or to assert, that what is now called liberty of conscience was allowed to exist in ancient times. The intolerance of Christians may furnish matter of sarcasm to the sceptic or the infidel: but they seem to forget, that for some centuries the Christians were patient victims to the intolerance of heathen magistrates and heathen philosophers. If we look to the first days of the republic or of the empire, we see the same exclusive spirit in matters of religion. Cicero has preserved a law, which he calls as old as the time of Romulus, and which ordered, that no person

A. D.
46.

A. D. 46. should have gods to himself, nor new gods; and that no person should worship in private strange gods, unless they were publicly recognised. There is also a speech preserved of Mæcenas, in which he advised Augustus to be particularly observant himself of religious worship as already established, and to force others to do the same; but if any were for introducing innovations, to hate and punish themⁿ. We have here the spirit of intolerance in all its bigotry and rigour. It was enforced, not perhaps without good effects, in the case of the rites of Bacchus and other obscenities^o: it was applied occasionally to get rid of the superstitions of Egypt; and I have already mentioned, that the Jews were sometimes confounded with the Egyptians, as objects of jealousy and of punishment. It may be said, perhaps, that the existence of so many thousand Jews in Rome is a proof that these laws were not very strictly enforced. They were at times ordered to quit the city, but the edicts were soon recalled, and they were allowed to observe their peculiar customs and forms of worship. This is certainly true; and the toleration was owing to the Jews not being anxious to make proselytes. If many Romans had adopted this foreign superstition, as it was called, the alarm would have become general, and the laws would have been enforced: but the unsocial and exclusive character of the Jewish religion was proverbial with the heathen. The Jews were represented as hating the whole human race^p: and though the feeling perhaps was mutual, neither the magistrate nor the philosopher cared to punish a people, whom

ⁿ Dio Cass. LII. 36. p. 689.

^p Tacit. *Hist.* V. 5.

^o Liv. XXXIX. 11.

they were contented to despise, and whose peculiar tenets produced no sensible effect upon the national religion. It was not so, however, with Christianity, when it began to be widely spread. The Jews asked only for toleration, and to worship the God of their fathers unmolested. They looked upon an image as an abomination in their own country, and would have died rather than suffer it to be erected: but in Rome or any other city they took no pains to draw away the heathen from their false gods. The Christians, on the other hand, felt it a solemn duty to spread their tenets. Their object was not to gain toleration for themselves, but to extend salvation to others. Their religion admitted of no compromise, and no divided worship. Wherever idolatry existed, they saw a field for their exertions: and the first step in the conversion of an heathen, was to make him an apostate from the laws and religion of his country. Such no doubt was the impression produced by the preaching of St. Paul at Philippi: and it was for this violation of the laws, that the magistrates ordered him to be scourged and imprisoned.

A. D.
46.

I need not relate the miraculous circumstances, which attended the release of Paul and Silvanus. The authorities of the place were likely on the whole to receive a favourable impression of their religious tenets: and since the Philippian converts sent pecuniary assistance to Paul more than once after he had left them^q, we may perhaps infer, that the gospel was embraced by persons, who were neither few in number nor low in rank. It appears, that St. Luke continued at Philippi. He and Timothy had escaped imprisonment; and St. Luke will

^q 2 Cor. xi. 9. Phil. iv. 15.

A. D.
46.

be seen to take a particular interest in the welfare of the Philippian church. Some writers indeed have supposed him to be a native of Philippi, and have made that circumstance account for his long residence in the city. But I cannot see any satisfactory evidence of this fact; and I should rather infer, that his acquaintance with the Philippians began with this visit: and his being left there by St. Paul, to superintend the affairs of the church, is exactly in accordance with what we shall frequently observe in following the apostle's history.

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy went through Amphipolis and Apollonia to Thessalonica, which was the largest and most important city of any which they had yet visited in Greece. They staid here some weeks: and we now read for the first time of St. Paul working with his own hands to maintain himself. The apostles, it may be concluded, carried with them little worldly means for so long a journey. The maintenance of three or four men (and their company does not seem to have been greater) would not have been much burden to the converts, if they had asked to receive it of them. But we shall see, that St. Paul had good reasons for not wishing to have it said, that his journey was one of profit: beside which, he had promised the apostles at Jerusalem, that he would urge his converts every where to send relief to the Christians of Judæa^r; and at this time he was probably making a collection for that purpose. I have mentioned, that he allowed the Philippians to send him money, though he refused to take it from the Thessalonians: from which it may be inferred, that he knew the Philip-

^r Gal. ii. 10.

pian converts to be more wealthy; and there is no evidence, that he applied this remittance to his own personal wants. He speaks himself of having worked night and day, while he was at Thessalonica^s; and we know, that he did the same in other places. His occupation is called that of making tents: and an epithet is sometimes applied to him, which was evidently used in contempt, and which would describe him as a dresser or cutter of leather^t. The most probable notion seems to be, that he employed himself in making small portable shades of leather, for which the hot climate of Greece caused a frequent demand: and the employment, which was not particularly laborious or irksome, was perfectly compatible with what we conceive of St. Paul's rank in life, and the education which he had received. It was in fact considered disgraceful, as I have already observed, for a Jew not to teach his children some occupation: and any of his countrymen, if placed in the same situation, would perhaps have been able to support himself in a similar way.

A. D.
46.

In Thessalonica, where the Jews were sufficiently numerous to have a synagogue, we find the usual consequence, that they were the principal opponents of the apostle's preaching. This scene indeed was so invariably acted during St. Paul's journey through Greece, that we may call to mind what I have mentioned upon the authority of the Fathers, that the Jews, soon after our Saviour's crucifixion, sent messengers from Jerusalem, who prejudiced their countrymen every where against the Christians. I have said, that this may have been effected by means of

^s 1 Thess. ii. 9. 2 Thess. iii. 8.

^t Σκηνοτόμος Suicer *in v.*

A. D. 46. the Jews who attended the festivals, and then returned to their homes in different countries: and certainly when we consider, that this custom filled Jerusalem with foreign Jews three times every year, we cannot but suppose that St. Paul, wherever he went, found his countrymen partly acquainted with the history of Jesus. They would also know, that the authorities at Jerusalem were strenuously opposed to the rising sect: and that this was really the case, we may see fully confirmed by this first journey of St. Paul into Greece. There was no reason, however, why the inhabitants in general, and the persons in office, should have heard much, if any thing, of the Christian doctrines. The Jews would not be likely to give any information of this kind to the heathen among whom they lived: and it is plain, that in most of the Grecian towns, as in Thessalonica, St. Paul met with unprejudiced and willing hearers among the heathen. I have said, when speaking of Simon Magus, that the Gnostic philosophy was now beginning to be widely spread: and we have seen, that Simon himself was not only acquainted with the name of Jesus, but had for a time been a believer in his doctrines, and afterwards mixed them up with his own fanciful philosophy. I then stated that Simon, after his interview with Peter and John in Samaria, appears to have left Palestine and to have travelled into other countries. There is evidence of his being at Rome; concerning which visit I shall have occasion to speak hereafter: and it is probable, that if his object was to spread his opinions, he would not have neglected Greece, which lay in his way. Wherever he went, he would make use of the name of Christ: and there is reason to

think, that St. Paul would often have to remove the erroneous notions of Christ, which this impostor had disseminated. It does not however appear, that the northern part of Greece, which St. Paul as yet had visited, knew much of the Gnostic doctrines. Simon Magus was more likely to seek for disciples in Athens or Corinth, where philosophy had a wider field : and St. Paul's Epistles confirm the notion of Gnosticism having shewn itself in the Peloponnesus, before it was introduced into Macedonia. We can trace it at Ephesus, which place is likely to have been visited by Simon, when travelling from Palestine toward the west : it appears to have taken root in Crete, which island was again in the line of Simon's route ; and we may perhaps find signs of it at Corinth. All these places were perhaps infected by this false philosophy before the year 46, when St. Paul first entered Greece from the north : and if those obscure passages in the Epistles to the Thessalonians^u allude, as is most probable, to the Gnostic doctrines, we have evidence that St. Paul foresaw the approaching evil, and warned his Macedonian converts of the effects which it would produce. The Gentiles in Thessalonica appear to have embraced the gospel in considerable numbers : and though the Jews succeeded in bringing Paul before the magistrates, which was the cause of his leaving the city, they do not seem to have excited any general feeling against his doctrines : and it is plain, that on the whole he met with great success in Thessalonica.

A. D.
46.

He however found it expedient to go by night to Berœa, accompanied by Silas : and Timothy, who perhaps staid to perfect some arrangements in the

^u 2 Thess. ii. 3—13.

A. D. 46. Thessalonian church, followed shortly after. The Jews of Berœa furnished some exception to the prejudices of their countrymen; and several of them were persuaded to embrace the gospel. This however provoked the Jews of Thessalonica: and not satisfied with having driven the preachers from their own city, they tried to raise a feeling against them in Berœa. St. Paul's plan was never to exasperate the Jews, when their opposition was likely to injure the gospel: and once more he avoided them by a hasty departure, and set out by himself for Athens.

This is one of the most interesting periods of St. Paul's life. He appears to have been literally alone: and though avowedly a Jew, and the bearer of doctrines directly hostile to polytheism, he went to brave it in its strongest hold, and to challenge discussion in the most learned and philosophical city of Greece. Silvanus and Timothy were probably left in Berœa, where the short residence and hasty departure of St. Paul would have made their presence for some time highly expedient. The state of these infant churches in Macedonia was of itself enough to occupy the mind of St. Paul, even if he had not had to encounter the philosophers of Athens: and knowing, as he did, the unceasing animosity of the Jews, he felt a considerable desire to return and watch over them in person^x. His great object, however, was to advance: he knew generally, that a wide field was open to him, though he seems to have resigned himself entirely to his heavenly guidance, and not always to have been acquainted with the places which he was to visit next. If we follow his own words, he had for a long time contemplated a journey to Rome^y,

^x 1 Thess. ii. 18.

^y Rom. i. 13. xv. 23.

and perhaps still further to the west; and having advanced as far as Athens, he would naturally be unwilling to recede, though his presence would be of use to the Macedonian churches. He therefore provided as well as he could for the discharge of all his duties. I have mentioned, that Luke was probably stationed at Philippi; and if there were any Christians at Neapolis or Amphipolis, they may also have been placed under his superintendence. Silvanus, as we have seen, was left at Berœa; and there he appears to have staid: but Timothy received a message from St. Paul, while he was at Athens, to go to Thessalonica, and to watch over the Christians in that city^z. Thus these three zealous coadjutors of St. Paul were left in charge of the Macedonian churches; and Timothy, who had the central station at Thessalonica, would be able to communicate with either of his colleagues. This was the method adopted by St. Paul, and probably by all the apostles, for governing the churches. He still considered them as dependent upon himself, and watched over them with parental anxiety; but he committed them in his absence to the care of some person, in whom he could confide. These persons were furnished with the power of working miracles, and of imparting the same gift to others, whenever they thought fit. They were also to attend to the ordinary concerns of the church, and particularly to appoint deacons and elders, according as the numbers and wants of the congregations increased. Under the guidance of such men as Timothy and Silvanus, the churches in Macedonia made great progress. Sopater of Berœa, Aristarchus, Secundus, and Jason of Thessalonica,

A. D.
46.

^z 1 Thess. iii. 2.

A. D.
46.

Caius of some other place in Macedonia, have all had their names perpetuated by St. Paul; and when Timothy and Silvanus followed the apostle to Achaia, these men would take charge of the congregations in their respective cities.

St. Paul, however, as I have already stated, continued for some time by himself at Athens. The duration of his residence there is not mentioned, but it probably was not long; and the usual bitterness of the Jews seems not to have shewn itself as it had done elsewhere. The condition of Athens at this time can hardly fail to excite feelings of pity. Like the rest of Greece, it had sunk under the overwhelming influence of Rome, though it maintained a nominal independance, and was dignified with the title of the ally of the republic. The Roman arms had in fact emancipated it from the remnant of Macedonian tyranny: and though Sylla entered it as a conqueror, and the Athenians took part successively with Pompey and Antony, they were treated with kindness by the victorious party, which was probably owing to the interest excited by their former greatness. When St. Paul visited Athens, it was still noted as a place of learning: but the inhabitants preserved the same character for idle curiosity, which had been censured by Demosthenes nearly 400 years before^a: and the similarity of the charge which was brought against Socrates and St. Paul, of introducing strange gods, is a remarkable instance of the continued force of national prejudice. It would seem, however, either from the political weakness of the state, or from the effect of constant philosophical discussion, that the introduction of new opinions in re-

^a Philipp. I. p. 43. Epist. ad Philip. p. 156, 157.

ligion was not so dangerous a measure now, as it was some centuries before. It has been disputed, whether St. Paul was brought to the Areopagus, to be tried before the court which sat there, or whether it was merely curiosity which fixed upon that place as convenient for hearing his discourse^b. There is certainly no trace in St. Luke's narrative of any judicial proceedings: and though many of his hearers treated his arguments with contempt, he appears to have been at full liberty to explain them without molestation. He had never perhaps had to reason with such learned opponents as during his residence at Athens: and St. Luke expressly mentions some Epicurean and Stoical philosophers, who listened to his preaching. Upon the whole, his visit here may be said to have been successful. He obtained at least a patient hearing from many, who might have been expected to treat him with contempt: and we have not hitherto met with a more remarkable fact in the preaching of St. Paul, than his conversion of Dionysius the Areopagite. Sergius Paulus, the proconsul of Cyprus, was a man of rank; and being a Roman officer, his conversion to Christianity would perhaps have considerable effect. But Dionysius was a man of learning: and if, as is most probable, he was a member of the court of Areopagus, he held a station, which, in the better days of Greece, was one of the highest and most honourable, which any city could confer. Unfortunately, his history is so mixed up with fable, that we scarcely know what to believe. That he was in Egypt at the time of the crucifixion, and had his mind impressed by the preternatural darkness, though asserted by more than

A. D.
46.

^b Wolfius ad Act. xvii. 22.

A. D.
46.

one writer, is a tradition which few would believe^c. The books, which are still extant as written by him, are undoubtedly spurious, and were perhaps forged in the fourth or even in the sixth century^d. Whether he was an author at all, or at least of any Christian writings, may reasonably be questioned: though perhaps the fact of so many works being ascribed to him, may confirm the tradition of his having been a man of learning. That he was bishop of the church of Athens, is reported by another Dionysius, who was himself bishop of the Corinthian church toward the end of the second century^e: and the age of this witness, as well as his station and character, and the proximity of the two cities, make it improbable, that he should have been mistaken in this fact. At the same time it is a suspicious circumstance, that several persons, who are mentioned in the New Testament, are said to have been bishops of the places connected with their names. Thus Cornelius is said to have been bishop of Cæsarea, and to have succeeded Zachæus, though it is highly improbable, that either of them filled such an office. Perhaps the tradition is received with greater scepticism, because persons are unwilling to believe, that bishops, in the modern sense of the term, existed at all in those early times. But this is to let an argument depend upon a mere name: and the real question is, whether a particular individual was chosen to direct the affairs of a particular church. Dionysius the bishop of Corinth

^c See Pseudo-Dionys. Epist. ad Polycarpum, vol. II. p. 88. Suidas *in v.*

^d See Dallæus, *de operibus Dionysioet Ignatii tribus*. Lauenoy, *de duobus Dionysiis*. Tille-

mont, *Mémoires*, tom. II. p. 436. Their genuineness is defended by Natalis Alexander, Diss. XXI. Sæc. I.

^e Apud Eus. H. E. III. 4. IV. 23.

must certainly have heard this of his namesake at Athens: and since we have seen, that it was the custom of St. Paul to commit his churches to the care of one individual, there is nothing improbable in supposing, that he made choice of Dionysius. His own residence in Athens was certainly not long: and he had no confidential friend now with him, like Luke or Timothy or Silas, who had been left by him in charge of the Macedonian churches. He would therefore be obliged to take the deacons and elders of the church at Athens from the new converts themselves: and I would again observe, that if there is nothing improbable in supposing Dionysius to have undertaken the office, there is nothing improbable in supposing St. Paul to have committed it to him. The subsequent history of Dionysius is involved in similar obscurity. There is respectable authority for supposing him to have suffered martyrdom^f, and the event appears to have happened in the reign of Domitian: but the tradition, which would connect him with the planting of Christianity in France, is only to be mentioned to be rejected as absurd and fabulous.

A. D.
46.

St. Paul appears to have left Athens and arrived at Corinth before the end of the same year in which he set out from Antioch, i.e. at the beginning of the winter of the year 46. He was still alone, not having yet been joined by any of his companions from Macedonia: but an event had lately happened at Rome, which provided him with an able and zealous assistant. Claudius had lately ordered all Jews to quit the capital: and there is some evidence, that the

^f See Routh, *Rel. Sacr.* I. p. 74. Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. II. p. 221.

A. D.
46.

edict was caused by the increasing progress of Christianity. I have mentioned, that the Jews were suffering from a similar act of severity about the time of our Saviour's crucifixion: and I also conjectured, that some of these Roman Jews, who soon after were allowed to return, may have carried back with them to Rome a knowledge of the gospel. We shall see presently, that by some means or other the gospel certainly made a rapid progress in that city: and we know, that the government was always extremely jealous of what it called *foreign superstitions*. It is more than probable, that the Jews in Rome would put themselves forward to suppress the new doctrines: and the Romans, who looked upon the whole nation with contempt, would see nothing in this opposition, but a dispute between two sects of a contemptible religion. If the Jews had recourse to the same turbulent measures in Rome, which we have seen them practise in Thessalonica and Berœa, it was quite necessary for the government to interfere: and a succession of disturbances of this kind, coupled with the dissemination of Christianity, would best illustrate the expression of Suetonius, where he speaks of the expulsion of the Jews^g. Those of them, who had embraced Christianity, would of course be involved in the same sentence: and perhaps the former decrees against foreign superstitions would now be directed specially against the Christians. It is possible, that this may have been the meaning of the charge brought by the Jews of Thessalonica, that Paul and his companions were acting contrary to the decrees of the emperor^h: and if Greece was at

^g *Judaeos impulsore Chresto assidue tumultuantes Roma expulit.* *Claud.* 25.

^h *Acts xvii.* 7.

this time more than usually filled by Jews, who had been forced to leave Rome, they would be particularly bitter against the Christians, who were in some measure the cause of the edict being passed.

A. D.
46.

St. Luke informs us, that one of the Jews, who had thus been obliged to leave Rome, was Aquila. By his birth, or at least by his family, he was connected with Pontus: but some cause or other, perhaps the purposes of trade, had led him to Rome: and since we find him there again in tracing St. Paul's historyⁱ, it is most probable that his usual residence had been in that city. His history, like that of Dionysius, has given rise to many inventions among the early writers: and perhaps we should receive nothing concerning him, except what we read in St. Luke and St. Paul. He is said to have been brother of Clement, who was afterwards bishop of Rome^k: but none of the early writers have mentioned Pontus as the country of Clement; and the story is probably altogether fabulous. It is a more interesting tradition, which represents him as having been a disciple of Simon Magus¹: and since there is reason to think, as I shall observe hereafter, that Simon Magus had spread his doctrines in Rome before this time, there would be nothing extraordinary in Aquila having been attracted by them. The sequel of this story, which states him to have been converted to Christianity by Zacchæus, is wholly unworthy of attention. We have no authentic account of Zacchæus subsequent to the crucifixion of Christ: and it is plain, that his name was a favourite vehicle for apocryphal tradition. We should not

ⁱ Rom. xvi. 3. A. D. 53.

^k Const. Apost. VI. 8.

¹ Clem. Recogn. II. 1, 6.
VII. 33.

A. D.
46.

know from St. Luke's narrative, whether Aquila was already a Christian, when he arrived at Corinth, or whether he was converted by St. Paul. He had arrived there but a short time before with his wife Priscilla, and St. Paul's acquaintance with him began from their both being engaged in the same trade. If Aquila and Priscilla now embraced Christianity for the first time, they embraced it zealously and heartily. We shall hereafter find them suffering more than once for the faith, which they professed: and according to Theophylact, they were finally martyred in the reign of Nero.

It is plain, that Corinth had not been visited by any apostle before St. Paul. Christianity had perhaps been scarcely heard of there, except by the Jews: and it had the distinction of being the first Grecian city, in which St. Paul made any long residence. Corinth, though at this time a large and populous place, was very far from having recovered its former splendour. After the destruction of it by Mummius, which happened 146 years before Christ, it continued for a long time little more than a heap of ruins. Julius Caesar, not long before his death, caused it to be rebuilt, and established there a numerous colony. Early in the reign of Augustus, when Achaia became a proconsular province, Corinth was the capital: from which circumstance it would be likely to rise in importance, as well as to approach more to the character of a Roman town. The maintenance of a proconsul being always a burden to a province, the inhabitants of Achaia petitioned Tiberius to be released from it; and for some years they were governed by a prætor, who held his office from the immediate appointment of

the emperor. Claudius, however, in the year 44, about two years before St. Paul's arrival, restored this patronage to the senate and people: and the name of the proconsul in the year 46, which has not been recorded by any heathen writer, is preserved by St. Luke. The office was then filled by Gallio, who is supposed to have been the brother of the celebrated Seneca: and though he is mentioned by his brother in terms of high commendation^m, his character is not treated so favourably by other writersⁿ. We shall see presently, that he did not interfere to the prejudice of St. Paul during his long residence in Corinth; and we may perhaps again notice his relationship with Seneca, when we consider the communications which are said to have taken place between that philosopher and St. Paul. Though Gallio gave no proofs of being himself impressed with the doctrines of the gospel, his government was perhaps not unfavourable to their propagation. In every case of opposition, which the apostle met with, we have hitherto seen the Jews to be the first and principal movers: and the Roman authorities either refused to interest themselves in such matters, or gave a tacit consent to the Jews indulging their malice. The apostles would therefore be safer in a Roman or Grecian town, than in one, which was more immediately subject to Jewish influence: and Corinth, which was the capital of a province, and the residence of the proconsul, was perhaps less likely than any other town in Greece to tolerate disturbances excited by a foreign religion. This may be one reason, why St. Paul staid so much longer in Corinth, than he had hitherto done in any other

A. D.
46.

^m Nat. Quæst. IV. præf.

ⁿ Tacit. *An.* VI. 3. XV. 73.

A. D. place upon his travels. He arrived there before the
46—48. winter of the year 46, and left it in the spring of 48, after staying there eighteen months.

I have already mentioned, that he lived at first in the same house with Aquila and Priscilla; and as usual, he began his missionary labours by preaching in the Jewish synagogues. His success was considerable both with Jews and Gentiles; and the name of Stephanus, who is said by Theophylact to have been a person of note, deserves to be mentioned, as that of the first Corinthian convert^o. The Jews, however, soon shewed symptoms of their usual bigotry; and the arrival of Silas and Timothy, which probably took place before winter, would be likely to give the apostle great comfort and assistance. They brought with them most favourable accounts of the converts whom he had left in Macedonia. They had been personally resident in Berœa and Thessalonica; and they might easily have communicated with Luke, who had been stationed at Philippi. In all these places the gospel was flourishing; and St. Paul pursued with fresh spirit the work which he had begun, being enabled now to hold out the Macedonian churches as an example to the Corinthians. It was now, that he wrote the first of those apostolical Epistles, which the church for eighteen centuries has valued among her richest treasures: and it is no small honour to the Thessalonian converts, that they were selected to receive this communication. The Jews in Macedonia had by no means withdrawn their opposition upon the departure of St. Paul; and since he was now so far removed from them, and Silas and Timothy had

^o 1 Cor. i. 16. xvi. 15.

also left them, the exhortations contained in his letter were particularly needed. St. Paul could write A. D.
46—48. feelingly upon this subject: for the increased zeal, with which he now continued his preaching, only increased the opposition of the Corinthian Jews; and he soon found it necessary to devote himself exclusively to addressing the Gentiles. He had the gratification, however, of making a convert among his countrymen, who, if not so distinguished a character as Dionysius at Athens, must have produced a considerable sensation by embracing the gospel. This was Crispus, who had been president of the synagogue: and the importance of his conversion is shewn by the fact of St. Paul baptizing him, even after the arrival of Silas and Timothy, with his own hands. The tradition of Crispus having been bishop of Ægina is perhaps one of those, which deserves to be rejected^p. It appears, that the apostle was not in the habit generally of administering baptism: his time was devoted to preaching, and instructing the converts: the great numbers of them would make the work of baptism extremely laborious; and he probably lost no time in appointing deacons, who might discharge this office. We find mention also of another president of the synagogue, who was a sufferer in the attempt made by the Jews to excite the proconsul against Paul. But whether Sosthenes appeared upon that occasion as a friend or enemy of the apostle, is a matter of dispute. If he was the former, it is probable that he was the same Sosthenes, who was afterwards the companion of St. Paul^q, and who appears as taking an interest in the

^p Constit. Apost. VII. 46. ^q See Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. I. p. 820.

A. D. 46—48. Corinthian church : so that during this residence of St. Paul at Corinth, two presidents of the synagogue were converted by his preaching. Caius also, who as well as Stephanus and Crispus was baptized by St. Paul himself, was probably a person of some note, or he would not have been so distinguished : but it is uncertain whether he is the same with Caius the Macedonian, who, according to some traditions, was bishop of Thessalonica^r.

The whole of the year 47 was passed by St. Paul at Corinth : and though we have his own evidence for the gospel not being embraced by many persons of rank or learning, we are expressly told, that he made many converts, especially among the Gentiles. He alludes himself to the miracles which he worked : and it is also plain, that the preternatural gifts of the Spirit were largely diffused among the members of the Corinthian church. He appears upon the whole to have met with little molestation. The Jews succeeded once in bringing him before Gallio's tribunal ; but they made nothing of the charge : and the conduct of the proconsul upon the occasion rather gave a triumph to the apostle than to his opponents. This is almost the only transaction, which we know to have occurred during the eighteen months, which St. Paul passed at Corinth ; and after he gave up attempting to subdue the obstinacy of the Jews, his time was probably spent with little variation in the same uniform course of instruction and conversion. He continued to receive favourable accounts of the Macedonian churches, and addressed a second letter to the church at Thessalonica. The Christians in that city had been suffering persecution, to which

^r See Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. I. p. 583, 816.

the Gentiles, as well as the Jews, appear to have been parties. The faith, however, of the new converts was not shaken : and St. Paul appears to have felt peculiar pleasure in thinking of his visit to Thessalonica.

A. D.
48.

In the former part of the year 48 he left Corinth, intending to be at Jerusalem early in June, to keep the feast of Pentecost. We need not seek for any special reasons for this visit to Jerusalem. It was now two years since he had been there, and he may have felt desirous of attending the festival. He may also at this time have had some contributions for the Christians of Judæa, as he had when he went there five years after : and we have seen, that he had promised the apostles at Jerusalem to excite his new converts to this work of charity. I have stated, that the continued famine may perhaps have made this assistance very acceptable in Judæa. Aquila and Priscilla accompanied St. Paul as far as Ephesus ; and from our finding them again in that city four years after, we may perhaps infer, that this was not the first time of their having visited it. St. Paul, however, had not yet been in that part of Asia Minor ; and from his being asked by some Jews at Ephesus to prolong his stay, we are perhaps to conclude, that the gospel had already found its way into Ephesus, though as yet it had not been visited by any apostle. Being bent upon reaching Jerusalem by Pentecost, he could not comply with their request. He promised, however, to return to them shortly ; and in the mean time Aquila, who remained there, would prepare the way for his personal preaching. Silas and Timothy appear to have accompanied him to Jerusalem, where, as I have already

A. D. 48. stated, he arrived by the feast of Pentecost^s: and I shall begin the following Lecture with a few remarks upon the state, in which he would find Judæa.

^s The New Testament tells us nothing of Silas after this visit to Corinth, except that he is mentioned in the First Epistle of St. Peter, v. 12. According to some traditions he preached in Gaul and died in Macedonia. See Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. I. p. 587.

LECTURE VII.

WHEN St. Paul attended the council at Jerusalem in the year 46, he found Judæa, as I then stated, once more in the hands of a Roman procurator, Tiberius Alexander : and the unpopularity of this man, as well as the increasing turbulence of the Jews, made the city and the whole country a scene of continued disorder and bloodshed. The political state of things had not improved, when he went there again in the year 48. A person was now rising into importance, who might have excited in the Jews some feelings of national attachment, and who lived to see the final misfortunes of his unhappy countrymen. This was Agrippa the younger, son of Herod Agrippa who died in 44 : at which time, as I then stated, his son was only seventeen years of age ; and the emperor Claudius, though well disposed towards him, did not choose to bestow on him any of his father's territories. In the year 48 his uncle Herod died, who was sovereign of a small territory, called Chalcis ; and Agrippa, who was now twenty-one years of age, obtained this from the emperor, which also gave him the superintendence of the temple with its treasury, and the power of appointing the high priests. The dates and successions of the Roman procurators about this period are involved in some obscurity : but it seems most probable, that in this same year 48 Tiberius Alexander was removed,

A. D.
48.

A. D.
48.

and the three districts of Judæa, Samaria, and Galilee were committed to two governors, Cumanus and Felix^a. The usual consequences of a divided government, jealousy, rapacity, and oppression, ensued. The two procurators, who rivalled each other in pillaging their subjects, either overlooked the crimes which were committed, or suffered the criminals to proceed, that they might fall upon them with more signal severity. We read of 20,000 Jews being killed in a riot by Cumanus^b. Every part of the country was infested with robbers and assassins: and when St. Luke despatches the visit of St. Paul to Jerusalem in a few words^c, we can easily explain why the visit itself, as well as the description, occupied but a short time. The aspect of Judæa must have caused great pain to St. Paul, even without reference to that spirit of prophecy, by which he probably foresaw the still greater evils which were impending over his unhappy country. Fortunately his mind had sufficient occupation without dwelling upon these misfortunes; and when he once more took leave of his countrymen, it was to resume those labours, to which he now felt, that his life was to be exclusively devoted. In Antioch, to which place he went from Jerusalem, he would find a very different state of things, and one which would console him for the miseries, which he had lately witnessed. Under the government of Quadratus, who was appointed president about this time, the province of Syria enjoyed comparative rest. This officer was

^a Tacitus, *An.* XII. 54. Josephus *Antiq.* XX. 6 et 7. *de Bel. Jud.* II. 12. Concerning the disagreement between these

writers, see Brotier *ad Tac. l. c.*

^b Joseph. *Antiq.* XX. 5, 3.

^c Acts xviii. 22.

often called upon (and perhaps his instructions pointed out this course) to interfere in the affairs of the neighbouring province of Judæa: and while the presence of a strong Roman force kept the Jews of Antioch in subjection, or perhaps drove the worst part of them into their own distracted country, the Christians in that city remained unmolested, and enjoyed that protection, or rather that quiet obscurity, in which the Roman government for some years allowed them to continue. It was now about two years, since St. Paul had left Antioch to commence his second journey; and the gospel appears to have met with the same success during that interval, which had marked its progress there from the beginning. There is reason to think, that St. Peter was at Antioch, when St. Paul left it, or at least that he had been there not long before^d. Roman Catholic writers have asserted, that the church of Antioch was founded by St. Peter, which is certainly not true, and has no support whatever from scripture. It is also asserted, that he held the see of Antioch for some years: an expression, which if taken in any thing like its modern signification, is perhaps not true of any of the apostles; whose custom, as I have already observed, was not to continue stationary in one place, but to travel about, planting new churches, and occasionally visiting those, which they had already founded. This required them to commit the Christians in each city to the care of some one individual, though they themselves continued to superintend the work which they had begun: and this will explain, why later writers, when they enumerated the bishops of the dif-

A. D.
48.

^d See p. 160.

A. D. 43. ferent sees, sometimes began the list with an apostle, and sometimes with the first person appointed by an apostle. We have seen, that this mode of conducting the government of distant churches was followed from the first by St. Paul: and perhaps in this sense we may admit St. Peter to have had some share in establishing the church at Antioch. I have already observed, that there is no evidence of his having visited that city till the year 46, though St. Paul had been there frequently before, and the gospel had probably been carried thither within a few months after our Saviour's ascension. There is good evidence for naming Evodius as the first bishop of Antioch: and though the date of his appointment is uncertain, we may perhaps follow Eusebius, who places it early in the reign of Claudius. If that writer meant to place it precisely in the year 43, as some have supposed^e, Evodius was appointed at the period which is described by St. Luke, when Barnabas had brought Saul from Tarsus, and when they passed a whole year in Antioch. The date is not improbable; though as the name of Evodius is not mentioned by St. Luke among the prophets and teachers, whom he enumerates shortly after, I should be inclined to place it somewhat later. When St. Peter and St. Paul met at Antioch in the year 46, they both of them were on the point of visiting distant churches. The time or the place of their next meeting was wholly uncertain; and nothing is more likely, than that before they parted, they committed the church at Antioch to the care of some one person, who was worthy of such a trust. This person,

^e The Armenian edition of the second or third year of Claudius. the Chronicon places it in the

as I have stated above, was Evodius: and if I am right in supposing him to have commenced his office in the year 46, St. Paul would be able to judge of his ability and zeal, when he revisited Antioch after an absence of two years in 48^f.

A. D.
48.

St. Paul remained in Antioch some time. It was about the middle of summer, when he arrived there: and most of the remaining part of the year was occupied by him in traversing Asia Minor. He probably visited the churches, which he had planted in his native country Cilicia: and we are told particularly, that he passed through Galatia and Phrygia. This was in fact the same route, which he had taken two years before. The gospel appears to have advanced prosperously during his absence, and hitherto we hear nothing of false teachers having perverted his doctrine. The churches of Laodicea, Colossæ, and Hierapolis, which were afterwards so celebrated, if they were not planted during his first visit, as I before conjectured, were perhaps established now. If Silas and Timothy accompanied him to Jerusalem, as seems most probable, they would be of great use to him in confirming the Asiatic churches: and when he joined his former companions at Ephesus toward the end of the year, he would be able to give them a most cheering account of the progress of the gospel. Hitherto he had scarcely seen any thing of

^f Some have supposed that Ignatius and Evodius were both appointed to preside over the church at Antioch, and that Ignatius succeeded to the sole management upon the death of Evodius in 68: but it is most probable, that they were ap-

pointed separately and consecutively, as I have stated. See Halloix, *Ignat.* p. 294, 394. Baronius ad an. 45. §. 13. Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. II. part. II. p. 44, 442. Natalis Alexander, *Sæc. I. Diss. XIII.* Co-teler. ad Const. Apost. VII. 46.

A. D.
43.

Ephesus: and it is plain that before this year, the gospel was very little, if at all, known in that city. Aquila and Priscilla had remained there, when St. Paul proceeded to Jerusalem; and an event had happened during his absence, which on many accounts deserves to be considered at some length.

It is at this time, that the name of Apollós is first mentioned. He was an Alexandrian Jew, and a man of learning. His knowledge of the scriptures is particularly mentioned: but if we may judge from Philo, and from what we know generally of the literature of the Alexandrian Jews, his regard for the Law of Moses would not hinder him from corrupting, or at least blending, it with portions of heathen philosophy. Before he came to Ephesus, he had heard something of the doctrine of Jesus Christ; and what he had heard, had made an impression upon his mind: but this interesting fact becomes less easy to comprehend, when we read, that hitherto *he was acquainted only with the baptism of John*. This expression, together with that of his *being instructed more fully in the way of God* by Aquila and Priscilla, make it plain, that when he came to Ephesus, his belief in Jesus Christ, if it existed at all, was very imperfect. There can however be no doubt, (for so much is positively stated by St. Luke,) that he believed in the baptism of John, and that he had heard of Jesus Christ: and the actual state of his mind upon these two points might furnish matter for much curious speculation. It was now nearly twenty years, since John the Baptist was beheaded: and the evangelical narrative would not perhaps lead us to infer, that his ministry produced much impression, or was even

much known, out of Judæa. This, however, is perhaps one of the conclusions, which we are apt to form erroneously from the concise language of the Evangelists. The multitudes, who were personally acquainted with John, were evidently extremely numerous: and it is difficult to conceive, that some of the foreign Jews, who attended the festivals, did not partake of his baptism, and carry back an account of it to their respective countries. No person would perhaps imagine, that Apollos had himself been baptized by John: and the words of St. Luke must be taken as a satisfactory proof, that John's baptism still produced an impression after the expiration of twenty years. A passage in the Jewish Antiquities of Josephus might perhaps lead us to the same conclusion. Educated as he was in Judæa, and passing the early part of his life in that country, Josephus might not perhaps tell us any thing of the effect which John had produced in distant places. But Josephus was not born till seven or eight years after the Baptist's death; and what he writes concerning him, could not have been collected till several years later. It is plain from this passage, that Josephus had heard much of the effect of John's preaching: and when he speaks of John recommending his baptism as efficacious, not for the removal of sins, but merely for the purifying of the body^g, I cannot help concluding, though the commentators have not noticed the expression, that it was covertly intended as an insinuation against the Christian doctrines. A

A. D.
48.

Ἐ Οὕτω γὰρ καὶ τὴν βάπτισιν ἀποδεκτὴν αὐτῷ φανείσθαι, μὴ ἐπὶ τινων ἁμαρτάνων παραιτήσῃ χρό- μένων, ἀλλ' ἐφ' ἀγνείᾳ τοῦ σώμα-

τος, ἃτε δὴ καὶ τῆς ψυχῆς δικαιοσύνη προεκεκαθαρμένης. *Antiq.* XVIII. 5, 2.

A. D.
43.

man of learning and observation, like Josephus, must at least have heard what were the leading points, which the Christians professed to believe; and he must have known, as a matter of fact, that they baptized their converts, and promised them remission of sins. In the passage to which I have alluded, I conceive him to have wished to tell his readers, that the baptism of John was not intended to convey remission of sins; a remark which was in one sense true: and hence he wished to insinuate, that the pretensions of the Christians to remit sins by baptism were equally unfounded. We may perhaps suppose Apollos to have received the same account of John's baptism, which was given to Josephus; but it produced upon him a different impression. The preaching of John may be considered in two points of view: 1. as inculcating the necessity of virtue and repentance: 2. as preparing men for receiving forgiveness from one who was shortly to appear. The first of these two doctrines was plain and intelligible; the second was involved in some obscurity. The precepts, which enforce the former, can never be altered or superseded; but the announcement of forgiveness by a Saviour who was to come, must necessarily be changed when the Saviour had arrived. Now if we suppose, out of the multitudes that flocked to John's baptism, that many, or at least some were foreign Jews, we may conceive them returning to their homes, impressed not only with the necessity of repentance and an amended life, but with a belief, that the promised Redeemer was at hand, and that he, whose coming was announced by John, was the long expected Messiah. This notion was perfectly in accordance with what

we know to have been the general opinion at that period, that a great deliverer was shortly to arrive : and the disciples of John the Baptist were perhaps only distinguished by their coupling this expectation with a stricter attendance to the duties of morality. The religious notions of Apollos may have been of this kind : he may have been taught to look for a spiritual, rather than a political deliverance ; and he may have hoped for mercy and forgiveness, not through his own righteousness, but through the Messiah, who was shortly to come. Of a person, whose mind was in this state, we might truly say, that he was *not far from the kingdom of God*. The process was probably a short one, by which Aquila and Priscilla convinced him, that the object of his faith and expectation was already come ; and that Jesus of Nazareth was the person, whom John had announced, and whose death had actually worked the deliverance, which the followers of John so earnestly expected. The conversion of a disciple of John into a disciple and a preacher of Christ was natural and easy : and Apollos, who was well acquainted with the scriptures, became at once a powerful advocate of the Christian cause in the Jewish synagogues. It seems, however, to have been reserved for St. Paul to lay the foundations of the Ephesian church : and the zeal of Apollos was perhaps more successfully directed in merely watering where the apostle had planted. He was sent with letters from the few Christians who were at Ephesus to Corinth, and he was there of great use in confuting the Jews, who had perhaps become more bold upon the departure of St. Paul^h.

A. D.
48.

^k Jerom speaks of Apollos as bishop of Corinth : *In Tit.*

A. D.
48.

The great apostle in the mean time, as I have already stated, had gone from Jerusalem to Antioch, and travelled from thence through Phrygia and Galatia: and it was perhaps not long before winter, that he arrived at Ephesus. We are not told by St. Luke, whether he found Aquila and Priscilla there or no. He had left them at Ephesus, when he went on to Jerusalem; and they were certainly there shortly after, when they converted Apollos. We have also evidence of their being at Ephesus at two subsequent periodsⁱ: but they had visited Rome in the interval^k; and I should rather conclude, if they had not now returned to Rome, that they were not at Ephesus, when St. Paul arrived there. I should infer this from the small progress which the gospel appears to have hitherto made in that city; and particularly from the fact of St. Paul meeting with some persons, who, like Apollos, were only acquainted with John's baptism; and who had not heard of the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Unless we suppose St. Paul to have met these persons upon their first arrival, it is difficult to conceive that Aquila and Priscilla, if they were still there, would not have already converted them: and their history, as it is related by St. Luke, furnishes another instance of the very general impression, which the preaching of John had produced. These men, like Apollos, had been baptized in token of their admitting the doctrine of

iii. 13: but there is no evidence of such an appointment. The traditions are still less worthy of attention, which represent him as bishop of Colophon, of Durazzo, and of Conium in Phrygia. See Canisius, *Antiq.*

Lect. p. 929. Ferrarius, *Martyrol. univ.* ad 22 Julii.

ⁱ 1 Cor. xvi. 19. (A. D. 52.)
2 Tim. iv. 19. (A. D. 64, 65, or 66.)

^k Rom. xvi. 3. (A. D. 53.)

repentance; and they believed that some greater person than John was shortly to appear: but they had not heard, that this person was already come; nor did they know any thing of the preternatural gifts, which the Holy Ghost bestowed upon the believers in Jesus. I have already said, that the power of imparting these gifts appears to have been confined to the apostles: and since St. Paul had not yet distributed them in Ephesus, these persons could not have witnessed them, unless they had met elsewhere with some other apostle. The necessity of baptism is remarkably confirmed by the fact, that these men, though they had received the baptism of John, were baptized again, as soon as they professed their faith in Christ. The baptism, which they had previously received, gave no remission of sins, and no spiritual grace. It was merely an initiatory rite. It shewed on the part of the recipient, that he felt the necessity of repentance: but John could not forgive sins, when the atonement as yet was not offered: and they, who had not heard of Jesus, could not have that faith, which alone can ensure the assistance of God's holy Spirit. The case, however, of these men and of Apollos may shew, how truly John the Baptist was the forerunner of Christ: or in other words, that repentance and holiness are the true preparations for receiving the gospel. They felt their own insufficiency, they felt the necessity of a Saviour: and when their hearts thus led the way, the terms of salvation were accepted as soon as they were proposed.

A. D.
48.

The conversion of these men (which appears to have been the first ministerial act of St. Paul at Ephesus) must have contributed also to the propa-

A. D. 48.

gation of the gospel: for they received the miraculous gifts of the Spirit, and were enabled to speak different languages; an effect, which had probably not yet been felt in Ephesus. This city now became the scene of St. Paul's labours for a much longer period than he had as yet passed in any one place. He had spent eighteen months in Corinth, and apparently met with little opposition, except from his prejudiced countrymen. The philosophers of Greece probably treated him with contempt: but this was of little importance, as it affected himself; and the very fact of being despised perhaps saved him from persecution. But we shall see his long residence in Ephesus attended by that systematic opposition, which now for the first time was exhibited by the heathen, and which exposed the Christians for nearly three centuries to a series of oppression and cruelty.

Ephesus was the capital of a province, which, like the rest of the civilized world, had bowed beneath the yoke of Rome, but which still retained traces of its former wealth and greatness. Like the United States of America in our own times, this part of Asia Minor had the name of the whole continent applied in a special manner to itself: and it was not peculiar to the writers of the New Testament to speak of Asia, when they meant merely Ionia and a few adjoining districts. Ephesus had now for many years taken the lead among the Grecian cities on that part of the coast. Strabo speaks of it as the place of the greatest trade in Asia to the west of mount Taurus; and its preeminence was still further established by its becoming the residence of the Roman proconsul. We must not suppose, that

the Roman authority was less absolute here than in other provinces, because we read of Asiarchs, who met at Ephesus from the different cities. It seems most probable, that they were so deputed : and their appointment might perhaps be traced to that venerable assembly, the Panionium, which was coeval with the colonization of the country. But the Asiarchs in the time of St. Paul had probably no political power at all. The Romans understood too well the art of governing, to allow more than the shadow of popular representation : and there is reason to think that the Asiarchs had no other functions to perform, than that of presiding (if presiding it might be called) at the public games. It might be doubted, whether it was the inherent coarseness of their own taste, or a knowledge of human nature, which led the Romans to find a political engine in the circus and the amphitheatre. Perhaps both causes combined : and if the emperor wished some act of tyranny to pass unnoticed, or if a tributary state shewed symptoms of disaffection, delusion and submission were obtained by a more than usually splendid display in the public games. The cities of Asia Minor were likely to be easily caught by this dazzling magnificence. In matters of taste they were always observed to be fond of the florid and ornamental : and in Ephesus this feeling found an additional vent in the pride of having their temple considered the wonder of the world. If St. Paul met with more opposition from learning and philosophy in Corinth than in Ephesus, he probably saw more of luxury and dissipation in the latter city ; and the Asiatic philosophy was at this period undergoing a change, which not only affected St.

A. D.
48.

A. D. 48. Paul during his residence at Ephesus, but to a most serious degree, and for a long period of time, produced a fatal effect upon the gospel.

I allude to the Gnostic philosophy, concerning the origin of which I made some remarks, when speaking of Simon Magus. I then stated, that Gnosticism took its rise in Alexandria, and might be described as a compound of the oriental philosophy, Platonism, and Judaism; to which Simon Magus is said to have added certain doctrines, which he borrowed from the gospel. I have also observed, that ecclesiastical history represents Simon Magus to have travelled from Palestine to Rome; and the progress of Gnosticism (as might be expected, if it commenced in Alexandria) may be traced in the same direction. Many proofs might be brought of this pernicious philosophy being eagerly embraced in Asia Minor, and particularly in Ephesus. The Epistles of St. Paul, which were written to or from that city, contain many allusions to it: and we might perhaps account for his long residence in Ephesus by the fact of this being the time, when Gnosticism first appeared there. He knew that the name of Christ held a place in that false and fanciful system; and he was anxious to sow the seeds of the true gospel, before the enemy had succeeded in introducing the counterfeit. Gnosticism was in fact not merely a perversion, but a subversion of the gospel. It taught, that Christ was a being who proceeded from God, and who came to reveal the true God to mankind: but it taught also, that the body of Jesus was a phantom, and that Christ was neither born, nor suffered upon the cross. Thus the doctrine of the atonement and of faith in the death of Christ found no place in the mystical

system of the Gnostics ; and this is sufficient to account for the anxious endeavours of St. Paul and the other apostles to arrest the evil.

A. D.
48.

Another characteristic of the Gnostics was their addiction to magic : and this perhaps contributed to procure a ready reception for their doctrines in Ephesus. The Ephesian letters or characters had been popular as charms long before the time of which we are speaking : and the number of persons, who were persuaded by St. Paul to abandon these superstitions, is a proof of the extent, to which this wickedness was carried. The teachers of Gnosticism appear at this time to have been principally Jews : and such persons were likely to be attracted particularly by St. Paul. It is not improbable, that the exorcists, who are mentioned by St. Luke, were persons of this kind¹. They saw the success of the apostle in curing the dæmoniacs ; and their system allowed them to make use of the name of Jesus for a similar purpose. We know, however, that the experiment failed ; and such cases were well suited to illustrate the difference between true and false Christianity. It has been conjectured also, that Apollonius of Tyana arrived at Ephesus during the time that St. Paul resided there. The existence of this impostor, and his success in pretending to preternatural power, can hardly be doubted : and what has been said of the extent to which magical arts were carried, may explain why such numbers were deluded by his spurious miracles. It seems certain, however, that his whole history is full of fables, which were added purposely to set him up as a rival to Jesus Christ. Many of the real miracles of our Lord and

¹ Acts xix. 13.

A. D. 48. his apostles may be recognised in the marvellous history of Apollonius; and if he encountered St. Paul at Ephesus, it is very probable that he tried to imitate him in some of his preternatural works. It is known that Apollonius was at Ephesus, where his fame obtained for him the honour of a statue. He was certainly pursuing his travels about this period; and, as I observed before, it is not improbable, that he came in contact with St. Paul: but though nothing could be more interesting than a detailed account of such a meeting, it is obviously not the province of history to dwell upon such conjectures.

A. D. 48—52. St. Luke accounts for two years and three months, which St. Paul passed at Ephesus^m: but the apostle himself, on a subsequent occasion, reminds the Ephesians of his having spent three years in warning and exhorting themⁿ. The two expressions might perhaps be understood so as not to present much disagreement: but there is good reason to think, that St. Paul by no means confined himself to Ephesus during the whole of this period. He arrived there in the winter of 48, and left it in the spring of 52: so that he may literally have been three years at Ephesus; and yet St. Luke, who was speaking of the beginning of his residence, may have been correct in saying, that he was there two years and three months. This might enable us to allow a year for his visiting other places, and returning again to Ephesus before his final departure: and we are not without materials for tracing his history during this interval.

In the first place we are not obliged to suppose, even when St. Luke speaks of his being all this time

^m Acts xix. 8, 10.

ⁿ xx. 31.

at Ephesus, that he literally never passed beyond the walls. St. Luke himself informs us, that *all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks*^o: and though this may have been done by persons flocking to Ephesus to hear the apostle, it is highly improbable, that he did not himself visit other places, and establish churches there. He had already on two former journeys approached the eastern boundary of Ionia; and there would be nothing unreasonable in supposing, that in some part of these three years he visited his converts in the interior of Asia Minor. But we have positive evidence, that before the year in which he left Ephesus, he had undertaken some more distant journeys, which are not recorded by St. Luke. His second Epistle to the Corinthians was undoubtedly written not long after his quitting Ephesus: and he there speaks, among other perils, of his having thrice suffered shipwreck, and having been a night and a day in the deep^p. We cannot but suppose, that he spoke of a period subsequent to his conversion, when he was labouring for the gospel; and St. Luke describes his first and second journeys too minutely to allow us to suppose these misfortunes to have befallen him then. These events, therefore, could hardly have happened till after the time, when St. Luke speaks of his arriving at Ephesus; and during the three years and some months, which elapsed before his finally quitting it, there is ample space for several journeys to have been taken. It would be useless to speculate upon the direction, in

A. D.
48—52.

^o xix. 10.

^p xi. 25. He also speaks of several other misfortunes, which are not recorded in the Acts, and which must have happened before the year 52.

A. D. 48—52. which St. Paul was sailing, when he suffered these shipwrecks; but there are many reasons, which induce me to conclude, that at this period he undertook a voyage to Crete. We have his own authority for saying, that once at least he was in that island, and left Titus there^q: and though some persons have placed this voyage much later in the apostle's life, I should be more inclined to assign it to this period. There are expressions in his Epistle to the Corinthians, from which we might infer, that he had also touched at Corinth^r; and perhaps in the coasting voyages of those days this was the most regular way of approaching Crete from Ephesus. In sailing to or from the island, he could hardly have failed to be out at sea a day and a night: but he most probably alluded to a storm, and this may have been one of the occasions, when he suffered shipwreck. The two other occasions of his meeting with this disaster cannot even be conjectured: but we are left to infer, that during this period of three years he preached not only in Asia Minor, but in some other countries, which required to be visited by sea. We may perhaps place this voyage to Crete in the year 51, which was the third year from his arrival at Ephesus. He appears, as I have said, to have touched at Corinth on his way, and perhaps he took Apollos with him from thence. Titus also accompanied him: and though this is the first mention of an apostle visiting the island, his presence was perhaps required by the gospel having already made some progress there. Some Jews from Crete were at Jerusalem, when the Holy Ghost fell upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost: and some of

^q Titus i. 5.

^r 1 Cor. xvi. 7.

these may perhaps have carried back a knowledge of the gospel. There are traces also of Gnosticism having been imported into Crete at the time of which we are speaking; and this may have been a reason, why St. Paul was anxious to visit the country in person. At the time of his leaving it there were congregations of Christians in several cities, and sufficiently numerous to require the establishment of deacons and elders. It would seem, that he had not time to remain long in the island himself; but having laid the foundation of the church, he left Titus to finish the superstructure. Apollos also was probably there; and the name of Zenas the lawyer is mentioned, who seems to have been a companion of Apollos. Titus was the person, who was commissioned by St. Paul to superintend the Cretan church. He was particularly enjoined to appoint elders in the different cities: and whatever may be said of the title, which he bore^s, yet when we consider the district committed to him, and the nature of his duties, it must be conceded, that his office very nearly resembled that of a bishop in the modern sense of the term. It is true, as I have observed before, that Titus would still be called an elder; and the elders, whom he appointed, were also called ἐπίσκοποι, for so they were in the district, or as we should now say in the parish, which each of them overlooked: but Titus surely was an ἐπίσκοπος in a higher sense of the term: and if it be allowed, that the whole of Crete was committed to his superintendence, with spiritual authority over all the elders and their churches, it is trifling about words to dispute whe-

A. D.
48—52.

^s He is called bishop of Crete in *Tit. Constit. Apost. VII. 46.*
by Eusebius, III. 4. Chrysost. See Baronius ad an. 58. §. 1.

A. D. 48—52. ther episcopacy was countenanced by St. Paul or no. It may be added, that in the instructions given to Titus by St. Paul, express mention is made of female elders. The same cause, which led to the appointment of deacons, would also require that the female converts should have some of their own sex to minister to them. In cases of sickness, and perhaps even in the solemn rite of baptism, it might have been expedient for women to be occasionally employed. Hence the order of deaconesses arose, which continued for some centuries in the church: but their office was confined entirely to temporal matters: there is no evidence whatever of their taking a share in spiritual concerns. St. Paul expressly prohibited their speaking in the Christian assemblies: and though they may have attended the female converts at baptism, there is no trace of the sacrament itself being administered by a female^t. Their office, as I have stated, was principally confined to works of charity: and the female elders perhaps only differed from the rest in being literally what their name implied, and in seeing that the younger deaconesses discharged their several duties^u.

I should conjecture, that St. Paul returned from Crete to Ephesus, and that shortly after he wrote his epistle to Titus. At this time he intended to winter at Nicopolis^x: and since there were many towns of this name, much discussion has arisen as to the particular place intended. The Nicopolis in

^t Tertullian mentions some heretics, who allowed women to baptize. *De baptismo*, 17. Epiphanius names the Pepuzians, a branch of the Montanists. *Her.* XLIX. 2. but he

denies that the custom ever existed in the church. *Her.* LXXIX. 3.

^u See Bingham, II. 22.

^x Titus iii. 12.

Bithynia is perhaps the most probable: but we are not obliged to suppose, that he kept to his intention of wintering there. If he did, and if the voyage to Crete was taken in the year 51, he returned to Ephesus before the Easter of 52. The labour of attending to all the churches, which he had planted, now began to press heavily upon St. Paul. Ephesus was a central spot for his communicating with them: and this perhaps was another reason, for his residing there so long: but it was an anxious care to watch over infant churches in Macedonia, Achaia, the island of Crete, and great part of the continent of Asia Minor. His converts in Macedonia appear to have caused him the least anxiety. Less learned and refined than the inhabitants of southern Greece, they were perhaps less likely to be led away by theory, or distracted by party. I have mentioned also, that Gnosticism appears to have been later in visiting the north than the south of Greece: and perhaps something is to be ascribed to the constant vigilance of St. Luke, who is supposed upon good grounds to have continued all this time at Philippi.

The Corinthian church unfortunately was not so tranquil. St. Paul had left Corinth in the spring of 48. His place was shortly after supplied by Apollos: and it has been conjectured, that about this period the city was visited also by St. Peter. This, however, must be considered a doubtful point^y: neither do we know to whose superintendence St. Paul committed the church of Corinth: and the want of his own personal presence appears to have been felt in several ways. The morality of the Corinthians

^y See Pearson, *De Success.* Diss. I. c. VII. 3. Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. I. p. 756.

A. D. 48—52. had never stood high: and this sometimes caused scandal and detriment to the Christian cause. Next to Athens, Corinth was perhaps the most distinguished Grecian city for learning and philosophy: and though the gospel is deeply indebted to real learning, the philosophy of the Grecian schools was more likely to perplex than to benefit the new converts. The divisions and parties, which St. Paul so strongly deplores in the Corinthian church, were encouraged rather than repressed by the sophists and their respective hearers. The resurrection of the body, with all its physical and metaphysical difficulties, was sure to form a topic of discussion: and as if the subtlety of the ancient sects was not sufficient to mar the simplicity of the gospel, the baneful spirit of Gnosticism was now beginning to spread itself in Greece. St. Paul himself may be quoted as shewing that the term *γνῶσις*, from which the Gnostics took their name, was used in a peculiar sense, and was arrogated by a certain party in Corinth^z. The discussions about marriage were perhaps introduced by these new philosophers: for while some of the Gnostics indulged in the grossest sensuality, there were others who inculcated every self-mortification, and prohibited marriage. The Gnostics also denied, that in any sense of the term there would be a resurrection of the body: they held, that the soul of the man, who had been purified by knowledge, as soon as it was separated from the body by death, fled up at once to the Pleroma, and there dwelt for ever in the presence of God. Whatever the Christians said of a resurrection, the Gnostics interpreted figuratively. According to them, the Gnostic rose from

^z 1 Cor. viii. 1, 7. xii. 8. xiii. 8. 2 Cor. vi. 6. viii. 7. x. 5. xi. 6.

darkness to light, from death to life, when he was initiated in their mysteries, and became perfect in knowledge. There is good evidence, that they adopted the Christian rite of baptism; and there is a tradition, that some of them, if a person died before the rite had been performed, substituted a living person, who was baptized for the dead^a. A fuller acquaintance with the tenets of this extraordinary sect would perhaps throw additional light upon St. Paul's Epistles to the Corinthians. The scruple about eating meats which had been offered to idols, was perhaps felt most strongly by the Jewish converts. These, however, formed only a small part of the Corinthian church; and here also the Gnostics may perhaps have been the cause of some dissension: for we know that a few years later, when persecution was raging, it was the characteristic of some Gnostic sects, to join without hesitation in heathen sacrifices. In addition to all these causes, which affected the whole body, there can be little doubt, that St. Paul's personal character had suffered in some respects during his absence from Corinth. In the course of the two or three years, which followed his departure, some persons seem to have visited that city, whose object was to injure the character, and to lessen the influence of St. Paul. The malicious design is undoubtedly to be traced to the Jews. Those among them, who altogether opposed the gospel, would think to further their end by throwing out calumnies against St. Paul: and we may infer, that some even of the believing Jews still retained their ancient bigotry, and could not acquiesce in the perfect equality

A. D.
48—52.

^a St. Paul has been supposed to allude to this in 1 Cor. xv. 29. See Bampton Lectures, note 78.

A. D. 48—52. between Jew and Gentile, which was preached by the great apostle. Jerusalem was the place, where these prejudices were most strongly felt. We have positive evidence, that at this time there were many myriads of Jewish Christians, who still adhered to the Law of Moses^b: and there is reason to think, that some among them even sent out emissaries to the countries which St. Paul had visited, and tried to persuade the Gentiles to conform to the Mosaic Law. Wherever the church was composed in a great measure of Jews, the agitation of this question caused much trouble to St. Paul. We shall have occasion to notice its effects in Galatia and at Rome; and if we see less of these dissensions at Corinth, it was from the cause already mentioned, that the Corinthian church was composed principally of Gentiles. The attempt, however, seems to have been made at Corinth; and it required no little firmness, as well as judgment in St. Paul, to maintain his influence with his converts, and to refute the calumnies which had been brought against him. I have conjectured, that he touched at Corinth on his voyage to or from Crete, and that this took place in the year 51. In the beginning of 52 he was again at Ephesus: and having fixed to make another tour through Greece, before he went to Jerusalem, he sent Timothy, not long before Easter, as the bearer of a letter to Corinth.

About the same time, or not long before, I conceive him to have written his Epistle to the Galatians. When he returned to Ephesus after his visit to Crete, he probably found accounts awaiting him from some of the churches which he had planted: and it is too plain, that the account from Galatia

^b Acts xxi. 20.

was calculated to give him much uneasiness. He A. D.
48—52. had visited that country at least twice: once in 46, when he first preached the gospel there; and again two years after, when he seems to have been no less warmly received than before. In the end of 51, or the beginning of 52, (about three or four years since his second visit,) I conceive him to have had occasion to write to them in language of reproof: but the evil, which he deplored, had probably not been felt much before this time. I have conjectured, that the bigoted party at Jerusalem sent emissaries to the countries converted by St. Paul, and endeavoured to impose upon them compliance with the Mosaic Law. The simple and half-civilized Galatians seem to have been easily persuaded by them; and with a rapidity, which is not surprising to those, who have studied the human mind, they immediately began to make the gospel merely an appendage to the Law. St. Paul, no doubt, had explained to them the connexion and the difference between the two covenants, and had warned them against the error which they now adopted. The lapse of three or four years could not have made them forget his lessons; and while they looked up to him as their spiritual father, they could hardly have been induced to listen to this new doctrine. It was necessary, therefore, for these false teachers to undermine the authority of St. Paul, and to draw off the Galatians from their warm attachment to him. They taught, accordingly, that he was not properly an apostle: that he had neither been a companion of Jesus Christ while on earth, nor received his commission from those who possessed this advantage. The Galatians, who are represented by heathen

A. D. 48—52. writers, as easily open to persuasion^c, were led away by this fallacious statement: and St. Paul heard with the deepest sorrow, that the field, which he had been cultivating for some years with the fairest hope, had in one night been thickly sown with tares. He saw that no time was to be lost: and in a tone of warm though affectionate expostulation, which does not appear in any other of his writings, he warned them of the fatal step which they had taken. It was an easy task to prove his own credentials as an apostle: and in a hasty sketch of his life from the time of his conversion, he shews that there was no period, at which any other of the apostles could have instructed him in the gospel. His instruction as well as his commission was given by special revelation from Christ: and thus he met the false teachers in that part of their argument, which concerned himself. But he cared for himself only so far, as his influence was essential to his saving the souls of others; and he told the Galatians in the plainest terms, that if they trusted to the Law of Moses for salvation, their faith in Christ would be of no avail. St. Paul was accused of *teaching all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs*^d. But this was a calumny. St. Paul only contended, that the Law of Moses had no power to justify. He knew, that faith in Christ's death could alone save from sin: but he knew also, that the Galatians were trusting for salvation to the Law of Moses. This was the fatal error, which called forth his warm

^c Themistius, *Orat.* XXIII. limachus in *Delum*, 184.
^d Acts xxi. 21.
 p. 299. Strabo IV. p. 299. Cal-

expostulation and his affectionate entreaties: and it is to be lamented, that we know nothing of the effect which his letter produced. A. D.
52.

When he wrote to the Corinthians, he intended to stay in Ephesus till Pentecost^e; after which he was to go through Macedonia, and so to Corinth; where he thought of passing the winter, and going from thence in the following year to Jerusalem. He had promised to excite his converts to make a collection for the Christians in Judæa: and it is interesting to see how early the custom arose of each congregation making a provision for its poor. The Galatian, Macedonian, and Corinthian churches all received instructions from St. Paul upon this head: and we may assume that in every other place the same custom was followed, which was, that when they met together for prayer upon the Sunday, each person should contribute a certain sum according to his means. Institutions of charity seem to have accompanied the gospel from its very earliest days. We have seen some of the first converts selling their property, and throwing the produce of it into a common stock; and we have seen deacons appointed, who had a special office to attend upon the poor. We know also, that in the Corinthian church a list was made out of the widows who were destitute of support: and it may be doubted whether Grecian history presents any parallel to this public subscription for the inhabitants of Palestine.

St. Paul's departure from Ephesus took place sooner than he expected. He had been there, as I have already stated, for a considerable portion of three years: and the gospel had now by his means

^e 1 Cor. xvi. 8.

A. D.
52.

made great progress, not only in that city, but throughout the whole country of Asia Minor. The Jews were perhaps not so numerous in this neighbourhood, as in other places, which St. Paul had visited; and the gospel seems to have been left to make its way with only the natural opposition which heathenism presented. The result was as might have been expected: but this success raised up enemies of a new kind, whose assaults were far more lasting and more fatal than those of the Jews. I have observed, that great jealousy always existed in Rome against the introduction of foreign superstitions. The same feeling had often shewed itself in Greece: and there was no place, in which a similar spirit was more likely to be displayed than in Ephesus, where the celebrity of the temple would make the people peculiarly attached to their tutelar deity and their national religion. Another powerful feeling also came into operation, when the preachers of Christianity began to diminish the worshippers in the heathen temples. The number of sincere believers in any system of paganism, of men who worshipped God with all their hearts, or who even knew what they worshipped, may perhaps have been small: and this was the great reason, why paganism, a religion of outward show, fled before Christianity, a religion of the heart; but paganism, with the pomp and pageantry of its worship, made many persons deeply interested in its preservation. From the architect and the sculptor, whose temples and statues became the wonder of the world, down to the lowest shopkeeper, who supplied materials for a sacrifice, there was a long series of persons, more or less important individually, but numerically of the greatest

importance, whose fame and even livelihood depended upon polytheism being maintained. It mattered little to such men, whether Diana or Apollo was the favourite deity of the day, but Christianity ruined them at once. “Nil præter nubes et cœli
“numen adorant,” was said, in contempt, of the Jews: and the Christians not only succeeded to this obloquy, but their apologists had even to defend them from the charge of atheism. There can be little doubt, that it was from such persons as Demetrius, the Ephesian silversmith, that this accusation came. It was no objection to atheism, upon any principles of philosophy or piety, which put the Christians to death; for then the followers of Epicurus, rather than of Paul, would have been the sufferers: but Demetrius let out the true reason, when he said to his companions, *Ye know, that by this craft we have our wealth.* The tumult, which this man was able to raise in Ephesus, is an excellent comment, not only upon popular commotions in general, but upon the history of religious persecutions. St. Luke says, that *the more part knew not wherefore they were come together*, notwithstanding that they shouted out for two hours, *Great is Diana of the Ephesians.* But the silversmith and his party knew very well, why they had brought the multitude together. They cared little or nothing for Diana of the Ephesians; but they cared for the money, which they got by making silver shrines: and it was because these men were in danger of losing their gains, that the apostles and their followers were to be put to death. This tumult appears to have been the first of the kind; and the authors of it were not yet able to engage

A. D. 52. the multitude in their cause. The Roman government also had not yet taken up the question: and a popular insurrection, from whatever cause it came, was always a thing to be repressed. The person, who appeased the tumult, seems to have known the temper of the citizens, as well as the character of the apostles: and there is good reason to think, that persons of some rank and station interfered for the protection of St. Paul. It has been disputed, whether he was not at this time made to fight with beasts in the amphitheatre at Ephesus: and his own words^f, as well as ecclesiastical traditions, have been quoted to maintain the affirmative. On the whole, I am rather inclined to reject the story. Had the attempt been made, he would probably have pleaded his Roman citizenship; and St. Luke, who has described the riot with some detail, would hardly have omitted such an interesting occurrence. We have, however, his own evidence for saying, that the latter part of his residence in Ephesus was attended with personal danger^g. When he wrote his Epistle to the Corinthians, he saw that the storm was gathering; and some of the Christians had perhaps already begun to suffer for their faith. I would not assert, that they had not been made to fight with beasts in the amphitheatre; and some such attempt would perhaps have been made upon the apostle, if he had not hastened his departure, and set out, as he had previously intended, for Macedonia. It was his plan to have left the Ephesian church under the charge of Timothy, who had gone to Corinth with the apostle's letter, and would

^f 1 Cor. xv. 32.
also Rom. xvi. 4.

^g 1 Cor. xv. 30. 2 Cor. i. 8, 10. perhaps

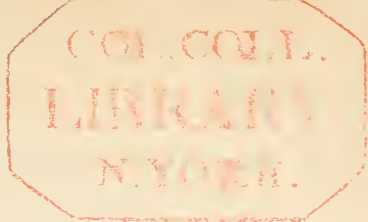
have returned to Ephesus before his departure, if he could have remained there, as long as he had intended. It is uncertain, whether Timothy arrived in time to see St. Paul. If he did, he had but a short interview, and St. Paul wrote from the first place where he stopped, perhaps from Troas, giving Timothy ample directions for the discharge of his important duty. The apostle's mind must have been distracted with various anxieties upon leaving Ephesus. He had fixed to go to Jerusalem, and perhaps wished to have another conference concerning the Gentile converts. It was six years, since he had seen his converts in Macedonia, who were particularly attached to him; and he was solemnly pledged to go soon to Corinth, if he did not even take it first before Macedonia. All this might reconcile him to leaving Asia Minor, where he had laboured successfully for upwards of three years; but still he was compelled to leave it at the crisis when his presence was most necessary. If Christian blood had not already been shed in Ephesus, there was at least great danger to the Christians who continued there: and if they escaped from these open enemies, there was a still more fatal danger to their souls from the Gnostic philosophy. There can be little doubt, that Hymenæus and Alexander, who were delivered by St. Paul to Satan not long before his departure from Ephesus^h, had embraced the Gnostic errors; and the apostle probably had recourse to this severity, that it might deter others from doing the same. The punishment seems to have consisted in the infliction of some bodily suffering; and it was part of the preternatural

A. D.
52.

^h 1 Tim. i. 20.

A. D. power committed to the apostles, to be able to visit
52. offenders with these visible tokens of displeasure.

The measure would be doubly necessary, when the Ephesian converts were deprived of the watchful superintendence of him who had instructed them; and Timothy, who had now been the companion of St. Paul for six years, and had been employed in the management of the Macedonian churches, was well suited to undertake the important charge. The apostle had some intentions of returning shortly himself. The length of his absence would depend upon the state of his converts in Macedonia and Corinth: but he was not aware at this time, that when he took his departure from Ephesus, he was never to see that city more.



LECTURE VIII.

ST. PAUL left Ephesus some time before Pentecost in the year 52. According to the plan, which he had fixed before the tumult in the theatre, he had intended not to set out till after Pentecost, to visit the churches in Macedonia, and to winter in Corinth. Being obliged to leave the city in a hurry, he seems hardly to have decided whether he should still keep to his former plan, or whether he should not hasten his journey through Greece, and return as soon as he could to Ephesus^a. On many accounts he was anxious to arrive at Corinth. His converts there were by no means in a satisfactory state, and he had not yet heard how they had received the letter which he wrote to them. When he reached Troas, he partly expected to meet Titus there, who for some reason or other had left Crete, and touching at Corinth was to have brought St. Paul an account of the state of the Corinthian church^b. It may have been about a twelvemonth, or perhaps more, since St. Paul himself was in Crete; and Titus was probably coming to confer with him, after having given regulations to the churches in that island. The apostle, however, did not meet with Titus at Troas; and though the gospel was already established there, and a pro-

A. D.
52.

^a See 1 Tim. i. 3. iii. 14, 15.

^b 2 Cor. ii. 12, 13.

A. D.
52.

missing field was open to his labours, he would not allow himself to stay, but passed on to Macedonia. His first Epistle to Timothy seems to have been written, as I have already stated, soon after his leaving Ephesus, perhaps from Troas; and it contains many evident allusions to the errors of the Gnostics. He had already told the Thessalonians, that the time would come, when many Christians would fall away from the faith; and he now delivers the same prediction to Timothy. I conceive both of these remarkable passages^c to relate to Gnosticism, and to evils which were to happen toward the close of the first century, when most of the apostles were dead. This defection to Gnosticism appears to have been a frequent topic in the prophetic warnings of St. Paul; and he naturally wrote more plainly and more fully to Timothy, because the evil had already begun to shew itself at Ephesus.

We have little or no account at this time of St. Paul's journey through Macedonia. He had two principal objects in view: to visit his converts in those parts, and to excite them to make a collection for the Christians in Judæa. He had partly prepared the way for the latter measure by sending Timothy and Erastus some time before; and while Timothy went on to Corinth with St. Paul's letter, Erastus remained in Macedonia. We know, that the Macedonians met this call upon their charity with the greatest alacrity, and St. Paul was able to use the zeal of them and the Corinthians as a mutual example to each other. While he was in Macedonia, he had also the gratification of receiv-

^c 2 Thess. ii. 1 Tim. iv. 1.

ing a favourable account from Corinth. Titus, who was to have met the apostle at Troas, joined him in Macedonia, and having been at Corinth since the arrival of his letter, he was able to acquaint him with its reception, and the good effect which it had produced^d. This intelligence was particularly gratifying to St. Paul; and he shortly sent Titus back again to Corinth, as the bearer of a second Epistle. He speaks also of sending with him two other persons, but does not mention their names: and great discussion has arisen, as to who these persons were. The notion was entertained by some ancient and modern writers, that one of them was St. Luke^e: but there are no good grounds for such an opinion, which seems to have arisen from a mistake. The apostle's own words make it more probable, that these persons were Macedonians; and he seems to have sent them on this mission, that one or both of them might finally accompany him to Judæa, and prevent any calumnious reports which his enemies might spread, of the Macedonian money not being properly applied. We know the names of some Macedonians, who were at Corinth at the end of this year, when the apostle himself was there; such as Aristarchus, Secundus, and Jason of Thessalonica, and probably Sopater of Beroëa; and of these, Aristarchus accompanied St. Paul to Jerusalem; so that he may have been one of the bearers of St. Paul's second Epistle to Corinth.

Before this Epistle was written, St. Paul had been joined by Timothy; and it is difficult to explain, why Timothy had so soon left his charge at Ephesus, and followed the apostle into Macedonia. There

^d 2 Cor. vii. 6.

^e Origen, Jerom, Grotius, Cappellus.

A. D. 52. is reason also to think, that Aquila and Priscilla quitted Ephesus about the same period: at least they were residing there, when St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians before Easter, and by the end of the year they had returned to Rome. We should wish to know what induced them and Timothy to leave Ephesus at a time, when the presence of every zealous teacher seemed so particularly needed. St. Paul speaks of Aquila and Priscilla having *laid down their own necks for his life*^f; an expression, which at least implies, that they had incurred some personal danger. This may have been at the time of the riot in the theatre, when St. Paul was persuaded by the brethren not to risk his own life, by encountering the populace: or they may have been exposed to peril subsequent to St. Paul's departure, and induced in consequence to seek a safer residence. If so, Timothy may also have been forced to leave Ephesus, from his life being in danger; and he may have gone to consult St. Paul upon these melancholy events; but I should be more willing to believe, that the storm blew over soon after St. Paul's departure; that the Ephesian church resumed its former security both from internal and external enemies; and that Timothy thought it better to pass a few months in company with St. Paul, intending to return with him to Ephesus, when the Grecian churches had been visited. We are apt to forget the small extent, which Greece occupied, even if we take in the Ionian colonies. A journey of four or five days would have brought Timothy from Ephesus to Macedonia, and he might have returned back again, if necessary, in

^f Rom. xvi. 3, 4.

A. D.
52.

as many more : and notwithstanding the defective navigation of those days, it is plain, even from the New Testament, that there was great facility of communication between one place and another through the whole of Greece. Timothy, however, did not return to Ephesus for some time, and was with St. Paul during his residence at Corinth ; which confirms the notion of the Ephesian church having become more tranquil. The same cause perhaps induced St. Paul to stay a longer time in Macedonia, than he at first intended ; and instead of going immediately to Corinth, and then back to Ephesus, he visited the churches, which he had planted in Macedonia, and traversed the country till he came to the borders of Illyria^g. This would occupy some months, and he probably would not reach Corinth till the beginning of winter.

This was the second residence of St. Paul in Corinth, and he staid there three months ; during which period, we know little or nothing concerning him, except that he wrote his celebrated Epistle to the Romans. He appears to have formed a wish some time before of going to Rome, and even beyond Italy, to Spain ; and at present his intention was to take that journey, as soon as he had been to Jerusalem. He had heard much of the flourishing state of the Roman church : and our curiosity is naturally excited, to know how the gospel had taken such deep root in a place, which as yet had not been visited by any apostle. Roman Catholic writers would not allow this statement, and would easily solve the difficulty by saying, that St. Peter visited Rome in the second year of Claudius, when he founded the church

^g Ib. xv. 19.

A. D.
52.

in that city. This assertion rests upon a single passage, which is perhaps interpolated, in the Chronicle of Eusebius: and nothing seems more certain from the Acts of the Apostles, than that in the second year of Claudius, which was the year 42, St. Peter had not travelled beyond Judæa. It is also plain from this very Epistle of St. Paul, that at the time of its being written, which was the year 53, no apostle had visited Rome^h; and he was himself anxious to go thither, because his principle was, not to build upon another man's foundation. Still, however, the seed had been sown, and, according to the apostle himself, was now bringing forth an abundant crop. I have conjectured, that some of the Roman Jews, who were at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, which followed the crucifixion, may have carried with them a knowledge of the gospel, when they returned to Rome. I mentioned, that Rufus, who was living with his mother at Rome, when St. Paul wrote this Epistle, was probably the son of Simon of Cyrene, and they may have been among the first preachers of Christianity in that city. St. Paul also mentions his relations Andronicus and Junias, who had been converted earlier than himself: and if the apostle's conversion happened, as I have supposed, within the first year after our Lord's ascension, it becomes highly probable, that these his two relations were among the first converts on the day of Pentecost. I have already observed, that it is not quite certain, whether Aquila and Priscilla had embraced the gospel, before they met St. Paul at Corinth in the year 46: but enough has been said to shew, that the gospel may have been known at Rome fifteen years before that

^h See Romans i. 11. xv. 18, 22.

period: and the edict of Claudius, which ordered the Jews to quit the city, most probably caused many Christians to seek a residence in other places. There are reasons to think, that this edict continued in force but a short time; and since the Christian community at Rome, at the time of St. Paul writing this Epistle, contained a great number of Jews, it is plain that they must have been allowed to return some time before.

A. D.
52.

It may perhaps appear extraordinary, that St. Paul should have written this letter to the Romans, when as yet he had not visited them, and had had no share in their conversion: but he himself perhaps furnishes the reason, when the principal part of his argument consists in proving that salvation cannot be obtained by the Law of Moses. The same reasoning, and the same exhortations, which he had used upon this subject to the Galatians, are repeated to the Romans: and we should not perhaps be mistaken in supposing, that the same false teachers, who had visited Galatia, went on afterwards to Rome.

There is reason also to think, that these Judaizing teachers were not the only persons, who had misrepresented the gospel at Rome. If Eusebius is to be believed, Simon Magus visited Rome immediately after he had been rebuked by St. Peter in Samaria: but Eusebius contradicts himselfⁱ: and if he knew only of one journey of Simon Magus to Rome, he might equally be quoted as placing that journey several years later. There is, however, another authority, which I cannot but consider as most respectable, which positively asserts that Simon went to Rome in the reign of Claudius. Justin Martyr, who was

ⁱ Compare H. E. II. 13, 14.

A. D.
52.

himself a Samaritan, of the same country with Simon, and must have been born early in the second century, speaks with some detail of the success of that impostor. He says that his doctrine had spread over the whole of Samaria, where he was looked upon as a god: he then adds with great minuteness, that he came to Rome in the reign of Claudius, was received there with divine honours, and had a statue erected to him in the river Tiber, between the two bridges, with a Latin inscription, SIMONI DEO SANCTO^k. I am aware, that the accuracy of Justin in giving this account, has been called in question, and he has been charged with making a mistake from not being able to read Latin. The same inscription, however, is quoted by Latin Fathers, who could not have been so deceived^l; and it is to be remembered, that Justin made this statement in a defence, which he presented to the emperor Antoninus Pius about the year 140, when he was himself at Rome; and it is difficult to believe, that he could have been so deceived concerning the history of Simon; or that he would have invented a story, which, if false, would have been detected not only by the emperor, but by every person in Rome. Upon the whole I am inclined to admit it as a fact, that Simon Magus came to Rome in the reign of Claudius, and that his doctrine met with an extraordinary reception: but since Claudius reigned nearly fourteen years, it is difficult to conjecture the date of his arrival. A spurious though ancient document, which has been ascribed to Clement^m, speaks of Aquila having been a disciple of

^k Apol. I. 26. p. 59.

^l Tertullian, Augustin. It is also noticed by the Greek writers, Irenæus, Theodoret,

Cyril of Jerusalem. See Bampton Lectures, note 42.

^m Recogn. Clem. II. 1.

Simon Magus : and since Aquila joined St. Paul at Corinth in 46, this would make Simon to have visited Rome during the six first years of the reign of Claudius. It is probable also, that the impostor himself, as being a Samaritan, might have been driven from Rome by that emperor's edict against the Jews : but the whole of this testimony concerning Aquila is worthy of little credit : and I should rather be inclined to place Simon's arrival at Rome late in the reign of Claudius, perhaps not long before the date of St. Paul's Epistle. Though Simon introduced the name of Christ into his extravagant philosophy, there is reason to think, that for some years at least it did not produce much effect upon the gospel. I have observed, that Gnosticism does not appear to have attracted the Christians in Greece, till about the latter part of St. Paul's residence in Ephesus. The apostle may also have heard, that the Roman Christians were beginning to be seduced by it ; and it may have been in allusion to this, that he said to them, *Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them : for they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly ; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple*ⁿ. This description is by no means inapplicable to the Gnostics, who in later times, if not now, defended immorality upon principle, and used their pretended miracles for the purposes of gain. It might be thought also, that evil was already beginning to be felt by the Christians from their being confounded with the Gnostics.

A. D.
52.

ⁿ Rom. xvi. 17, 18.

A. D. 52. The latter may have said, *Let us do evil, that good may come*; and they may have asserted, by a strange perversion of argument, that the principle was to be found in the doctrines of the Christians. If there are these grounds for believing, that the converts at Rome were in danger of having their faith perverted by the Judaizing teachers and by the Gnostics, we can easily account for St. Paul addressing to them this Epistle; and the more so, since he probably thought at this time, that within a few months he should himself visit Rome.

A. D. 53. The Epistle to the Romans was written from Corinth, when St. Paul was on the point of leaving it for Jerusalem: and since he travelled by land to Philippi, and set sail from that city immediately after Easter, the Epistle must have been written early in the year 53, probably in February. This agrees with what is said by St. Luke, that St. Paul passed three months in Greece. I have supposed some months to have been occupied by his journey through Macedonia, and that he arrived in southern Greece at the beginning of winter. This would allow him to have spent three months there; and perhaps the greater part of the time was passed at Corinth. As soon as the season for sailing was arrived, he intended to set out for Judæa, taking with him the money, which had been collected as alms from the converts in Macedonia and Achaia. The Jews, however, laid wait for him; partly perhaps from their ancient enmity to him, and partly to get possession of the sum, which he was known to be carrying off. We are not informed of the plan which they had taken to intercept the apostle; nor does it appear why it was safer for him to take the

circuitous route of going through Macedonia by land, than to sail direct for Judæa by sea. He decided, however, upon the former course, and arrived at Philippi before Easter. I have mentioned some Macedonians, who were with him at Corinth, Sopater of Berea, and Jason, Secundus and Aristarchus of Thessalonica. All these, except Jason, appear to have left Corinth with the apostle: and in addition to these there were Timothy, and Caius, who was also of Derbe, and Tychicus and Trophimus, who were natives of Asia Minor, and probably of Ephesus. All these, except Sopater, proceeded immediately to Troas; but St. Paul himself remained at Philippi to keep the feast of Easter; and I may remark in this place, that there is evidence of the Christians having observed this season from the earliest times. The fact indeed could hardly have been otherwise, when so many of the first converts were Jews; and the Gentile converts had as good reason to remember the solemnity, which reminded them of their Saviour's resurrection. There can be little doubt, that St. Paul himself, and perhaps all the Christians, at this early period, observed the feast of Easter according to the Jewish method of computation. The time of it depended upon the Paschal full moon, and the Asiatic churches continued for a long time to adhere to this rule. The western churches did not make it a moveable feast: but the controversy, which arose from this difference of customs, belongs to a later period of ecclesiastical history. It is supposed that the festival lasted for fifteen days, i. e. for the seven days which preceded Easter Sunday, and the seven which followed it.

A. D.
53.

When the Easter was over, St. Paul set sail for Troas to rejoin his companions ; and since St. Luke accompanied him from Philippi, but was not with him before, there is reason to think that he had been staying some time in that city. The last time we have had any positive mention of St. Luke, was when he arrived at Philippi with St. Paul in the year 46 ; and since he does not speak of himself as accompanying the apostle from that city, and it is plain, that he was not with him at Athens or Corinth, I conjectured, that he continued at Philippi, and had a principal share in managing the Macedonian churches. During the six years which followed, we hear nothing of St. Luke ; and whether he remained at Philippi till 53, when he accompanied St. Paul to Jerusalem, must be considered uncertain. It seems most probable, that he passed this interval either in that city, or in visiting other places of Macedonia ; and the flourishing state of the churches in those parts is perhaps to be ascribed to the zeal and ability of St. Luke. Some persons have supposed, that he wrote his Gospel at this period : a notion, which rests principally upon the fact of his continuing so long in one place, where he might be conceived to have had leisure for such an undertaking. The hypothesis is capable of being neither proved nor disproved ; and the date of St. Luke's Gospel is perhaps correctly fixed to about this period : but it seems to me more probable, as I shall state presently, that it was written in Palestine.

St. Paul arrived at Troas in five days, where he found the rest of his company, and staid there seven days. It is not necessary for me to dwell upon the miracle of his raising Eutychus to life : but the occasion, which

led to it, furnishes one of the many proofs, that the first day of the week was observed by the Christians for meeting together to pray, and to take the bread and wine. We know also, from an Epistle written by St. Paul in the preceding year, that charitable collections for the poor were sometimes made on the Lord's day^o. This was the name, which it generally bore. The heathen name of Sunday was applied to it in the second century even by Christians^p; and perhaps this was the case at an earlier period. There can however be no doubt, that the Lord's day was observed in the time of the apostles, and it was always considered as a day of rejoicing. In later times it was held unlawful to fast upon the Sunday: but this rule was perhaps not established in the first century^q. The Christians were also accustomed for a long time to observe the Jewish Sabbath as well as the Sunday. It was perhaps natural for them to do so, while so many of them had been Jews: and those who have watched the effect produced by times and seasons, will not be surprised that even the Gentile Christians should have assisted afterwards in continuing the custom^r.

St. Paul probably staid purposely these seven days at Troas, that he might pass the Sunday there; but we have already seen, that the gospel had made some progress in that town. He had found St. Luke there in the year 46, when he was passing over for the first time into Macedonia. How long St. Luke had been staying there, does not appear: but he had probably preached with success; and when St.

^o 1 Cor. xvi. 2.

Paul fasted on the Sunday.

^p Justin. Mart. *Apol.* I. 67.

Epist. XXVIII. ad Lucinium.

^p 83.

^r See Bingham. XX. 2. Hol-

^q Jerom observes, that St. den on the Christian Sabbath.

A. D.
53.

Paul came to Troas from Ephesus in 52, he found, as he says, *a door opened to him*^s for preaching the gospel. At that time he was not able to stay there; but at present, though he was in a hurry to proceed, he remained seven days. From thence in five days more he arrived at Miletus, having sailed by Ephesus without stopping there: for though the inducement was great to visit his converts in that city, he knew that he should find it difficult to leave them, and he was anxious, if possible, to be at Jerusalem by Pentecost. He therefore stopped at Miletus, and sent to Ephesus, which is about fifty miles off, requesting the elders of that church to come and meet him. The scriptures scarcely contain a more affecting scene, than that which took place in consequence. St. Paul's address to these persons, whom either he or Timothy had placed over the Ephesian church, not only throws light upon his former residence in that city; but if we take historically what he delivered prophetically, we learn something of what took place at Ephesus after this period; and when the apostle said, *I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock: also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them*, he seems very plainly to allude to the errors of the Gnostics. If we take his words literally, he seems also to have known, that his converts at Ephesus were never to see him again; and we certainly have no account of his ever visiting Ephesus after this time. Nothing is said of his leaving Timothy at Ephesus on this occasion: but since St. Luke is equally silent as to Timothy

^s 2 Cor. ii. 12.

going on to Jerusalem, we might perhaps conjecture, that he staid with his Ephesian converts, from whom he had now been separated about a twelvemonth^t.

A. D.
53.

There is no occasion to follow the apostle in his voyage along the coast of Asia Minor. There was no place, at which he stopped even for one day, till he reached Tyre; but here he met with some Christians, and staid with them a week. It does not appear, that he had ever been here before: but Phœnicia is mentioned among the places which received the gospel from some of those persons, who were dispersed upon the death of Stephen. Twenty-two years, therefore, had elapsed since Christianity had first been established in Tyre; and lying as it did, on the road from Jerusalem to Antioch, it was not unlikely to be occasionally visited by some of the apostles. We might perhaps conjecture, that this had been the case, since there were persons there, when St. Paul arrived, who possessed the spirit of prophecy; and it seems certain, that these spiritual gifts were only conveyed by the hands of an apostle. The disciples at Tyre had received preternatural intimation, that some misfortune would befall the apostle at Jerusalem: but such anticipations had no effect upon him, and he proceeded on by Ptolemais to Cæsarea. We here meet again with Philip, who was one of the seven deacons, and who after converting the Samaritans, and baptizing the Ethiopian eunuch, is said to have gone to Cæsarea. It must have been an interesting meeting between him and the apostle, if they had never met since the time that Saul's persecution had forced the surviving

^t This is also the conjecture of Baronius.

A. D.
53.

deacons to leave Jerusalem. Cæsarea was perhaps the usual residence of Philip : but we need not suppose, that he had confined himself to that one place during the two and twenty years which had elapsed. St. Luke calls him *the evangelist* : by which we are certainly to understand, that a special gift of the Spirit enabled him to preach the gospel ; and we are perhaps to infer, that without holding an office in any definite church, he preached in his own city, and in other neighbouring places. The nature of these spiritual gifts may be further illustrated by what we read of his four daughters, who had the gift of prophecy ; by which we are perhaps to understand, that they were specially enlightened in expounding the scriptures. There is abundant evidence, that this and every other miraculous gift was bestowed without any distinction of sex : and though St. Paul prohibited females from speaking in the churches, they would have frequent opportunity of exercising their spiritual gifts, in making converts of their own sex, and in instructing those who already believed. It is singular, that so many early writers have confounded Philip the deacon with Philip the apostle ; and when we are told, that two of his daughters, who died unmarried, were buried with himself at Hierapolis, and that a third was buried at Ephesus, there is perhaps an allusion intended to the daughters of the evangelist, mentioned in the Acts, though the tradition related more properly to Philip the apostle.

We have still another instance of these spiritual gifts in the case of Agabus, who came down at this time from Jerusalem to Cæsarea. He may perhaps have been the same person, who more than twelve

years before had predicted the famine, which happened in the reign of Claudius; and he now signified to St. Paul, by a symbolical representation, common in eastern countries, that he would be imprisoned at Jerusalem and delivered to the Gentiles. The prediction is worthy of being remarked, because it appears plain from other passages, that St. Paul, though gifted to a high degree with the spirit of prophecy, had not yet received a clear revelation of what was awaiting him. He had been able to foretell to his converts at Thessalonica and Ephesus, that the Gnostic errors would in a few years, and after his own decease, be productive of great evils to the church. He even knew, that his converts at Ephesus would never see his face again; and yet it is plain, that it was not till his arrival in Judæa, that he knew the full extent and the immediate approach of the trial which he was to undergo. When he wrote to the Romans, he fully expected that he should see them shortly, and that after having been to Jerusalem he should be at liberty to travel in any direction: but if there could be any doubt upon this point, it would be removed by what he said to the Ephesian elders, *Now I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.* The fact is curious, as illustrating the nature of these preternatural illuminations; and so far from making us think less of the apostle's inspiration, it ought greatly to strengthen our conviction, that there was no delusion in these spiritual gifts, and that St. Paul spoke truth when he said, *There are diversities of operations, but it is the same God*

A. D.
53.

A. D. 53. *which worketh all in all: and all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.* An impostor would never have laid claim to imperfect inspiration. If the whole had been a contrivance, St. Paul and not Agabus would have been the principal prophet. He would never have acknowledged, that he was ignorant of the fate which awaited him; nor would he have left it to inferior pretenders in the different towns, to disclose by degrees what personally concerned himself. The persons, who are surprised, that St. Paul's foreknowledge was limited, can have paid little attention to the question of prophecy. Inspiration cannot be separated from the notion of a superintending and controlling power: if it could, or if the extent of the foreknowledge depended upon the will of the person possessing it, it would cease to be inspiration: and if we proceed to say, that St. Paul was not inspired, because he did not know every thing, we are in fact deciding what it is best for God to do; and we are judging by ordinary and human rules of that which by the very hypothesis is extraordinary and superhuman. If a person denies the existence of prophecy, he must be met by other arguments: but if he allow it to be possible, it bespeaks not only a more humble, but a more philosophical mind, to judge of prophecy by what is revealed. Inspiration would not be given at all, but for wise and good purposes; and he, who thinks that St. Paul's foreknowledge ought to have exceeded that of Agabus, should be prepared to prove, that the counsels of God would have succeeded better, if this had been the case.

The prediction so clearly made by Agabus pro-

duced no more effect upon St. Paul than the warnings, which he had received at Tyre. His resolution was fixed, and he continued his journey to Jerusalem: but before we proceed to consider his reception there, a few remarks will be necessary concerning the political state of Judæa.

A. D.
53.

It was now five years, since St. Paul had visited the metropolis of his countrymen: at least we have no account of his going thither since the year 48; and it does not appear, that he visited Judæa during the three years, which he spent for the most part in the neighbourhood of Ephesus. His last visit was a short one, which was caused, as I then conjectured, by the disturbed and melancholy state of affairs in that country. Cumanus and Felix had just been appointed to the joint government of Judæa, including Samaria and Galilee: and nothing could exceed the rapacity of these two governors, and the miseries which ensued to the people at large. At length, in the year 50, when Quadratus the president of Syria was ordered by Claudius to investigate the cause of these continued outrages, Cumanus was deprived of his share in the government^u; while Felix, who was equally guilty, contrived to escape, and had the whole of the province committed to his rule. He was perhaps indebted for this iniquitous partiality to his brother Pallas, the celebrated freedman and favourite of the empe-

^u Joseph. *Antiq.* XX. 5. Tacit. *Annal.* XII. 54. Suidas has preserved a curious fact, if the truth of it could be proved, that "Claudius sent Felix to govern the country, when there had been disturbances

" between the Jews and Christians, and he had orders to punish the latter." voc. *Claudius*. It might be thought, if we compare this passage with Josephus, that Suidas meant to write *Σαραπίτων* for *Χριστιανῶν*.

A. D.
53.

ror Claudius : but though hitherto his government had been marked by avarice and oppression, there is reason to think that the Jews were gainers by having got rid of one of their oppressors. When Tertullus said to Felix, as is reported in the Acts, *We enjoy by thee great quietness, and very worthy deeds are done unto this nation by thy providence*, the flattery was not altogether unfounded, though it was only by comparison with still greater anarchy, that the country could then be said to be enjoying quietness. The *sicarii* still committed many acts of violence ; but Felix had no interest in tolerating them, and he took every means to put them down by the strong arm of power. Eleazer, who for twenty years had acted as the head of these marauders, was taken by his exertions and sent in chains to Rome ; but this perhaps happened after the arrival of St. Paul. Impostors also continued to appear from time to time, taking advantage of the national expectation of the Messiah, and drawing after them great multitudes, who frequently fell under the severity of the government, as being guilty of riot. It was not long before the arrival of St. Paul, that an Egyptian tried a similar artifice, and deluded as many as 30,000 persons, who followed him to the mount of Olives, and threatened to enter Jerusalem. The inhabitants, turbulent as they were, and impatient of their yoke, willingly supported Felix in checking such formidable invaders ; and the Roman garrison quartered in Jerusalem quickly dispersed the ill-organized rabble, whom fanaticism and a love of plunder had united in this hopeless enterprise^x.

^x Acts xxi. 38. Joseph. *de Bel. Jud.* II. 13, 5.

The priesthood was not exempt from the violence and disorder which were now disfiguring the political state of Judæa. The high priests had for some time been tools in the hands of contending parties; which not only led to a quick succession of them, but caused them to be implicated in much of the wickedness and intrigue, which were now so shamelessly practised. They did not scruple to employ sicarii to get rid of a rival: and at the time of St. Paul coming to Jerusalem, it was difficult to say, who was really high priest. Ananias, who had been appointed to that office in 47, was sent to Rome by Quadratus in consequence of a dispute between the Jews and Samaritans. This probably happened about the time that Felix secured the sole government; and such causes did not generally obtain a speedy hearing in Rome. In the meantime the high priesthood had been given to Jonathan, who had held the office before, and was now advanced in years. He had been of some use in procuring the government for Felix; and he took advantage of this service, as well as of his age, to remonstrate with the governor upon the violence of his measures. Felix could ill bear such expostulations, and bribed a confidential friend of Jonathan to put him to death^y. While this tragedy was being acted, Ananias appears to have obtained his release from Rome, and to have returned to Jerusalem. Finding the high priesthood vacant, he probably resumed it, as if his place had never been filled by another. It is not certain, whether this resumption of his office was ever ratified by the proper authority; and it was perhaps more easy for him to

A. D.
53.

^y Joseph. *Antiq.* XX. 8, 5.

A. D. 53. dispense with such a ceremony, because the power of making and deposing the high priests was vested, not in Felix, but in Agrippa. I have stated, that this young prince, upon the death of his uncle Herod in 49, succeeded to his small kingdom of Chalcis: and four years after, in the year of St. Paul's arrival at Jerusalem, Claudius took this territory from him, and gave him Trachonitis and the adjoining district. This change in his dominions, as well as the situation of them, would be likely to keep him from Jerusalem, and to hinder him from looking closely into the appointment of the high priests: so that Ananias may have held the office for some time after his return from Rome, and it was not the business of Felix to investigate his claim. There is reason to think that in this same year he was deposed by Agrippa, and Ismael appointed in his room.

Such was the state of Judæa, when St. Paul arrived there in the year 53: and we may now proceed to pursue his personal history at this critical period of his life. He reached Jerusalem immediately before the feast of Pentecost, when the city would be crowded with foreign Jews from many distant places. It does not appear, that any of the other apostles were now at Jerusalem; from which we may perhaps infer, that they were dispersed in distant countries to preach the gospel. James was still the resident bishop of Jerusalem: and his station is marked by the fact of St. Paul going to him on the day after his arrival, and giving an account of his proceedings to him and the elders who were present. The other persons, who had travelled with St. Paul, also attended this meeting. We know, that Luke, Ari-

starchus, and Trophimus, were with him, and perhaps some more of those, who set out from Greece. I have conjectured, that Timothy was left at Ephesus; and perhaps some others remained at different churches on the way. Those, who went on to Jerusalem, were well received by the brethren in that city; and there seems to have been a full and explicit understanding between them, as to the measures which had been adopted with the Gentile converts. Still, however, there was a strong Judaizing party, who had heard, that St. Paul wished to absolve the Jews, as well as the Gentiles, from the obligation of obeying the Law; and though James and the elders knew that the report was false, they urged upon St. Paul the expediency of giving it an immediate and open contradiction. St. Paul could easily do this without compromising any principle. He only maintained, that the Law and its ceremonies could not procure salvation: but if a man chose to observe them, as mere ceremonies, he never objected; and there is no doubt, that he himself adhered to the Law of Moses in many particulars. All that he wished to impress upon his converts was, that such things were in themselves indifferent; and the rule which he gave for compliance or noncompliance, was whether other persons were likely to take offence. He had now to apply this rule to his own case. James and the elders had no intention whatever of imposing the Law of Moses upon the Gentiles; but they knew, that St. Paul would give offence to many, if he did not comply with it himself. They therefore pointed out a ready method, by which he might prove his regard for the ceremonial Law. There were always several persons in Jerusalem, and particularly at the

A. D. 53. great festivals, who took upon them the vow of a Nazarite: that is, they vowed to abstain from wine, or any fermented liquor, for a certain number of days, the term being optional with themselves; and when it was over, they were to bring the prescribed offering to the priest; till which time the hair of their head was not allowed to be cut. The offering appointed for the Nazarite at the expiration of his vow was very expensive^z; and it often happened, that a poor man began his course of abstinence, but was not able to fix the termination of it, because he had no means of providing the offering. In these cases the vow might continue a long time: and a king or great person, when he arrived at Jerusalem, sometimes made himself popular, by enabling the Nazarites to provide their offering^a. The elders happened to know of four Christians, who had taken upon themselves a vow, which they were not able to discharge; and they therefore suggested to St. Paul, that if he took the same vow upon himself, and assisted these men to provide their offering, the fact would be publicly known, and the charge brought against him would be proved to be false. He accordingly went the next day with the four Nazarites publicly into the temple; and they made their declaration, that in seven days they would bring their offering to the priest.

This probably satisfied the Judaizing Christians: but the city was filled with foreign Jews; and St. Paul was now too well known, not to have some enemies among those who were come to worship.

^z Numbers vi. 14, 15.

^a Josephus, *Antiq.* XIX. 6, 1. *de Bel. Jud.* II. 15, 1.

A. D.
53.

The Jews, who lived at Ephesus, were particularly likely to remember him, after his long residence in that city; and we find that the Jews of Asia Minor were the first authors of his troubles. They also recognised Trophimus, who was an Ephesian and a Gentile; and they chose to say, that St. Paul had brought this man into the inner part of the temple, which none but Jews were allowed to enter. The charge was made, when the seven days were nearly expired, and when St. Paul himself happened to be in the temple. A great tumult ensued; and it seems to have been preconcerted, that St. Paul should be dragged out of the temple, and put to death in the confusion. The temple, however, was overlooked by the tower of Antonia, a strong fortress, which Herod had rebuilt, and called after the name of Mark Antony. The troops, which the Romans always kept in the city, were quartered here; and during the festivals, which frequently led to a riot, the soldiers remained under arms, and were ready at a moment's notice to descend by two flights of steps to the porticos of the temple^b. The commander at this time was Claudius Lysias; who being informed of the tumult, immediately hastened to the spot, and rescued St. Paul, who had already received several blows. The throng continued so great, that as soon as he was fastened by chains to two soldiers, Lysias ordered him to be taken to the tower of Antonia; and while they were making their way up the steps, he had time to ask him some questions, as to who he was. It was perhaps an intentional falsehood of some of the rioters, which led him to mistake St. Paul for the Egyptian impostor, whom I mentioned not long

^b Joseph. *de Bel. Jud.* V. 5, 8.

A. D. ago : but being answered by him in Greek, and
 53. hearing him declare himself a citizen of Tarsus, he
 allowed him to address the multitude from the steps
 on which they were standing.

St. Paul delivered his address in the language of the country, which so far pacified the Jews, that they listened to him for a time, while he related the history of his conversion : but when he mentioned, that his commission extended to the Gentiles, they no longer restrained their impatience, but shewed by shouts and other indications, that they were bent upon taking his life. The tribune prevented this by carrying St. Paul within the fortress ; where he would have proceeded to scourging him, with a view of extorting a confession, if St. Paul had not declared himself to be a Roman citizen. This saved him from further indignities, and procured him a release from his chains : and the next day, the tribune ordered the chief priests to convene the Sanhedrim, and brought St. Paul out of the fortress to appear before them. He had no sooner begun his defence, than Ananias ordered the bystanders to strike him in the face ; a wanton insult, which called forth a remonstrance from St. Paul, together with a propheticall allusion to the violent death which Ananias afterwards met with^c. Being reprov'd for speaking thus disrespectfully to the high priest, he professed his ignorance, that the office was at this time filled : and what I said before, of Ananias returning from Rome after the murder of Jonathan, will explain the reflexion, which St. Paul seemed to cast upon the legality of his appointment. This was perhaps a ques-

^c Josephus. *de Bel. Jud.* II. 17, 2, 6, 9.

tion, which Ananias was unwilling to agitate: and St. Paul gained a further advantage by declaring himself a Pharisee, and stating that his belief in a resurrection was the cause of his then standing as a criminal before them. I have conjectured, that the dissension between the Pharisees and Sadducees had been of some service to the Christians very early in their history; and it now so far befriended St. Paul, that the Pharisaical part of the council declared him to be innocent. The tumult which ensued was so great, that Lysias was again obliged to interfere, and carry St. Paul within the fortress; and being informed in the course of the next day, that more than forty Jews had made a vow to put St. Paul to death, he determined to send him by night to Cæsarea, where Felix was then residing. At the same time he wrote to Felix, asserting his belief in the innocence of Paul; and he settled with the chief priests, that they should go in a few days to Cæsarea, and state their complaints to the Procurator.

Ananias went down in person, and an advocate was hired to give more weight to the accusation. St. Paul also was heard in his defence; and on the whole he seems to have produced a favourable impression. We are told, that Felix was well aware of the progress which Christianity was making; and though St. Paul failed to convert him, the power of the gospel was never more strongly exhibited, than when Felix sent for him frequently, and heard him deliver those awful truths, which a sinner is generally unwilling, because afraid to receive. Felix was alarmed; but unfortunately many causes combined to hinder his repentance. The wife, or to speak

A. D. more properly, the adulteress^d, with whom he was
 53—55. living, was not likely to assist in his reformation.

The Jews had shewn a disposition to complain of his government; and the elevation of Nero to the empire, which took place in the following year, required him to take measures for obtaining an influence with the new sovereign. The affairs of the east were also in some alarm from an invasion of the Parthians. Quadratus the president of Syria took the field: even Agrippa with his small territories was ordered to furnish his contingent; and Felix, if not absent from Cæsarea, must at least have been actively employed in these military movements^e. Political business and intrigue prevailed over the workings of conscience. There was a chance of his pleasing the Jews by keeping Paul in prison: and so little did he know of the real character of his prisoner, that he allowed him to come often into his presence, not for the pleasure of hearing him, but in the hope of receiving a bribe for his release. The result was, that St. Paul passed two years in the prison at Cæsarea: and in the year 55, when Felix was superseded by Festus, he thought to lessen the displeasure of the Jews against himself, by leaving St. Paul still in prison. The plan, however, did not answer. As soon as he was gone, some of the principal Jews at Cæsarea followed him to Rome to accuse him to the emperor: and he would at length have suffered for his many years of misrule, if his brother Pallas had not again befriended him, and

^d Felix married three wives: his present wife was Drusilla, sister to Agrippa, who had been married before to Azizus, king of the Emeseni. Josephus, *Antiq.* XX. 7, 2. Tacit. *Hist.* V. 9. Sueton. *Claud.* 28.

^e See Tacitus, *Annal.* XIII. 7.

exerted his powerful influence to secure him from Nero's displeasure. A. D.
53—55.

The personal history of St. Paul, during the two years of his imprisonment, is necessarily a blank. In the former part of it, and perhaps throughout the whole, he was allowed by Felix to see any of his friends; and with the exception of not having his liberty, he seems to have suffered little personal inconvenience. I have mentioned, that Luke, Aristarchus, and Trophimus, attended him to Jerusalem; and since the two former accompanied him afterwards to Rome, we may perhaps conclude, that they were with him during his imprisonment. We have also seen, that Philip the evangelist lived at Cæsarea: and though I have rejected the tradition of Cornelius being bishop of that city, as not deserving of any credit, there is reason to think that a church was established there, which may have enjoyed some security by the presence of the Roman procurator.

I should be inclined to select this period as the most probable date of an undertaking, in which Christians of every country, and to the latest posterity, will feel an interest. I allude to the composition of the Gospel of St. Luke. I shall have occasion to observe, that his other work, the Acts of the Apostles, was written during the two years which St. Paul passed in prison at Rome; and we know that his Gospel was written first. We may assume therefore, according to the chronology which I have adopted, that St. Luke had written his Gospel before the summer of the year 55: and unless we conjecture him to have composed it at Philippi, there is no period, which would have afforded him so much leisure for the work, as when he was attending upon

A. D. 53—55. St. Paul in his imprisonment at Cæsarea. A great majority of critics has agreed in assigning St. Luke's Gospel to this period of his life, though they differ in the exact year, because the date of St. Paul's imprisonment is not certainly fixed^f. Philippi is not mentioned by any ancient author as the place of its composition: but some of these writers have named Achaia or Bœotia: there is also a late tradition of its being written at Alexandria; and so many conflicting accounts will only perhaps lead us to the conclusion, that little was known upon this subject in ancient times^g. Some writers have said that it was composed fifteen years after the Ascension; which would assign it to about the year 46, when St. Luke appears for the first time to have travelled with St. Paul; and this is sufficient to refute the notion of so early a date. That St. Paul in some way or other superintended its composition, is asserted by several authorities^h; and though this tradition might be sufficiently correct, if St. Luke committed to writing what he had heard St. Paul deliver in preaching, it may at least be quoted as confirming the supposition of this Gospel being written at Cæsarea. St. Luke had here ample leisure for collecting and arranging his materials; and St. Paul would be glad to further in any way the knowledge of that Gospel, which he was now hindered from preaching in person.

Another question has led to great discussion, which of the three evangelists, Matthew, Mark, or Luke,

^f See Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. II. p. 463.

^g See Lardner in his account of St. Luke.

^h Irenæus, III. 1. p. 174. Tertull. *Adv. Marcion.* IV. 5. p. 416.

was the first to publish his Gospel. Irenæus, who is the earliest writer upon the subject, certainly states, that Luke wrote subsequently to Matthew and Mark : but Clement of Alexandria, who flourished not much later, quotes an early tradition, which would require us to believe, that Matthew and Luke wrote before Markⁱ. I conceive the fact to be, that these three Gospels were published at no great interval of time from each other ; though perhaps some confusion may have arisen in the traditions, from a distinction not being observed between the writing and publishing ; and this may account for different writers giving the precedence to this or that Evangelist, and for their differing as to the country, in which each Gospel was composed. St. Luke himself informs us, that many persons had attempted, before his own work, to give an account of the transactions, which he was going to relate ; and I should certainly agree with those commentators, who suppose him not to include Matthew and Mark in this statement. It is most probable, that he had seen many such attempts ; some of them containing fragments, or merely detached parts of our Saviour's history ; but none of them presenting a detailed account from his birth to his death. These scattered narratives were likely to abound in Palestine, which was the scene of our Saviour's personal history ; and I should rather infer, that St. Luke did not mean to mark these unauthorized, and perhaps anonymous compositions, with his approbation. Several apocryphal gospels are extant, which were written at an early period ; but none of them seem to be so old, as those which are alluded to by St.

A. D.
53—55.

ⁱ Apud Eus. *H. E.* VI. 14.

A. D. Luke ; and it is most probable, that they were written in imitation of the three first canonical Gospels.
53—55.

If these remarks be correct, we may perhaps be inclined to place St. Luke's Gospel first in the order of time ; or at least to suppose, that at the period of his writing it, he had not seen those of Matthew or Mark. It is stated by early writers, that he wrote it for Gentile converts ; a fact, which we might be inclined to believe, from what we know of his constant attendance upon the great Apostle of the Gentiles. He addressed it to a person, named Theophilus ; concerning whom we know nothing certain ; but tradition points him out as a person of rank, and perhaps an inhabitant of Antioch. This may confirm the notion already advanced, that St. Luke himself was a native of that city ; and during the long period of St. Paul's imprisonment at Cæsarea, St. Luke was not unlikely to pay a visit to the Christians at Antioch, or other cities in Palestine. Before he set sail with St. Paul for Rome, he probably finished his Gospel, and sent it to Theophilus, wherever that person was residing.

The question of St. Luke's inspiration may be discussed in a few words, and has not always been placed upon its true footing. The subject has been perplexed by the advocates and opponents of inspiration treating it, as if we were inquiring, whether the evangelists were inspired, when they had the pen in their hands. But this is a very unnecessary inquiry. St. Luke was an Evangelist, not merely as writing a gospel, which he did once ; but as preaching the gospel, which he did for several years. Evangelists are mentioned by St. Paul among the persons, who received the miraculous gifts of the Spirit ;

and one of these persons was St. Luke. He includes himself, when he says of the vision, which ^{A. D.} 53—55. called St. Paul into Macedonia, *We assuredly gathered from it, that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.* This was very early in St. Luke's ministry, at which time he was called by the Lord to preach the gospel; and what is this but inspiration in the fullest and highest sense of the term? He continued to preach the gospel for several years. I have supposed an interval of eight years to elapse between his first accompanying St. Paul, and his beginning to write his Gospel. He had perhaps preached the gospel before this time: but during these eight years he certainly did so: and not a week, perhaps not a day elapsed, in which he was not employed in relating parts of the same history, which he afterwards committed to writing. The question therefore is not, whether he was inspired, when he wrote his Gospel, but whether he was inspired, when he preached the gospel. That St. Paul, who communicated the gifts of the Spirit to so many of his converts, would not have included St. Luke, can never be seriously maintained. He undoubtedly received these miraculous gifts, and employed them for many years in preaching the gospel. A special inspiration therefore was not needed, when he afterwards committed the same facts to writing, which he had been delivering orally for so long a period: or if it was, we could never suppose, that the preternatural assistance, which had been vouchsafed to him so long, would have deserted him at a time when it was most needed for the benefit and instruction of all succeeding Christians.

LECTURE IX.

A. D.
55.

I HAVE stated, that Festus succeeded Felix as procurator of Judæa in the year 55^a: and when he came into his province, probably in the middle of summer, St. Paul had been imprisoned at Cæsarea two years. Political changes of some importance had taken place in this interval. In the year 54 Claudius was poisoned by his wife Agrippina, whose son Nero then succeeded to the empire. In the first year of his reign he gave a further increase of territory to Agrippa, who, as I have already mentioned, had received from Claudius the country called Trachonitis and the adjacent districts. Nero now bestowed upon him part of Galilee, and several towns in Peræa; and his position might be thought to be of some importance, when he was looked to as one of the means of checking an irruption of the Parthians. Josephus and Tacitus as well as St. Luke give him the title of king, though Judæa, properly so called, still continued subject to the procurator's authority. The only connexion, which Agrippa had with Jerusalem, arose from his retaining, by permission of the emperor, the direction of the sacred treasury, the government of the temple, and the right of nominating the high priests. Ananias, who had re-

^a For this date I may refer to my work upon the Chronology of the Acts.

sumed the office of high priest not long before St. Paul's arrival in the year 53, was displaced soon after, and Ismael was appointed, who held the office for several years. A. D.
55.

In the second year of Nero's reign, Festus was sent to supersede Felix as procurator of Judæa, and the Jews lost no time in endeavouring to get St. Paul into their power. Festus, however, only gratified them so far, as to give them a public hearing at Cæsarea, when St. Paul was allowed to speak in his defence. It ended in his publicly appealing to the emperor, and claiming his right as a Roman citizen to have his cause heard at Rome. Some measure of this kind seemed now indispensable. He had already wasted two years in prison, which ought to have been spent in propagating the gospel. The arrival of a new procurator might give him some hopes of release; but the only offer, which was made him, was to have his cause heard at Jerusalem; and he knew, that a journey to that city would be followed by an attempt upon his life. An appeal to the emperor was therefore his most prudent course, if he merely looked to the recovery of his liberty; but it also insured him a journey to Rome: and though, when he had originally planned that journey, he had not thought of going thither in chains, still it enabled him to accomplish his purpose; and a direct communication from heaven had told him, that he should preach the gospel in Rome^b.

One more opportunity was given him of pleading his cause, before he set out for Italy. Agrippa, whom I have lately mentioned, came to Cæsarea,

^b Acts xxiii. 11.

A. D. 55. soon after the arrival of Festus, to congratulate him upon his appointment; and Festus, who knew little of the customs and religion of the Jews, told the king of Paul being accused by his countrymen, and of his having appealed to the emperor. Agrippa, who must have felt his real insignificance, when compared with the Roman procurator, would be glad of any opportunity, which made him appear of importance: and Festus would be pleased to flatter him at so easy a rate, as by appealing to his superior knowledge of Jewish law. The king and his sister Berenice were accordingly indulged with hearing Paul: and it was creditable to Agrippa, (though perhaps we ought to say no more,) that he professed himself almost persuaded to be a Christian. He seems to have been a man, who in better times might have governed a larger territory with advantage to his subjects: but since he survived the destruction of Jerusalem many years, and died at an advanced age without shewing any attachment to Christianity, we must not think too favourably of his paying this attention to the arguments of St. Paul.

The apostle shortly after set sail for Rome, and Luke and Aristarchus accompanied him. There is no reason to think that either of these persons had been imprisoned at Cæsarea. Aristarchus appears afterwards to have suffered confinement at Rome^c; but it is most probable, that both he and Luke were voluntary companions of St. Paul in his voyage to that city. Their shipwreck on the island of Malta, where they passed the three winter months, is too well known to require to be related. We are war-

^c Col. iv. 10.

ranted in asserting, that Christianity was at that time introduced into the island; and the miraculous cures performed by St. Paul would alone have been sufficient to make many converts: but when we read in ancient martyrologies^d, that Publius was made bishop of Malta, and afterwards succeeded Dionysius the Areopagite in the bishopric of Athens, we are perhaps to remember, what I have already stated more than once, that these lists of early bishops are sometimes deserving of no credit. At Puteoli, which was a common place of landing for persons coming from Sicily, they found some Christians, and continued there seven days; a period, which was evidently intended to include the solemnities of the Lord's day. We may form some opinion of the numbers and the zeal of the Christians then at Rome, when we find that in these few days they heard of St. Paul being at Puteoli, and that some of them came even as far as fifty miles from the city to meet him on his way.

A. D.
56.

The same vessel had brought other prisoners from Palestine, who, as soon as they arrived at Rome, were committed, as usual^e, to the commander of the prætorian guards. This post was held at present by Burrus, one of the few persons, whose characters relieve the depravity of the reign of Nero. It would have been interesting to know, that such a man had come in contact with St. Paul: but the charge brought against the apostle made his case an exception to those of the other prisoners, and he was allowed to choose a residence for himself, with the single restraint of having one of his arms fastened

^d Ado, *de festiv. Apost.* p. 39. Bolland. ad Jan. 21. p. 338.

^e See Plin. *Epist.* X. 65.

A. D. 56. by a chain to the arm of a soldier, who was thus his constant companion. The Jews of Rome appear to have been less illiberal and bigoted than those in the countries nearer to Asia, which St. Paul had hitherto visited. They had heard some of the general calumnies spread against the Christians: but their countrymen in Judæa had not taken the same pains to prejudice them against St. Paul, which they had used in Greece and Asia Minor. While he was at Cæsarea, they had hoped to put him to death, and so to hinder his further exertions; and he arrived at Rome so early in the year, that they had not had time during the winter months to send their usual emissaries, who might spread their calumnies against him. We know, that many of the Jews at Rome were already believers in the gospel; and St. Paul's first attempt, after arriving there, was to convert the unbelieving part of them. They at least listened to him with patience, and some were persuaded by his arguments: but St. Paul found enough of their usual obstinacy, to make him express himself with some harshness, and to declare explicitly his commission of preaching salvation to the Gentiles.

It is greatly to be lamented, that St. Luke did not continue the Acts of the Apostles beyond the arrival of St. Paul at Rome. He tells us indeed, that *he dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him; preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him*: but this is all the information, which he has left us; and what we know of these two years, is scantily gathered from

expressions in St. Paul's own Epistles, and from the few traditions preserved by ecclesiastical writers. A. D.
56—58.

We should wish particularly to know, whether he pleaded his cause before the emperor in person. Festus had professed himself at a loss as to the terms of the accusation, which he was to send with him to Rome: and we are not informed, under what description of prisoners he would be classed, when he arrived in that city. He had said distinctly to Festus, *Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Cæsar, have I offended any thing at all*: and Festus as well as Agrippa had acknowledged as distinctly, that *he had done nothing worthy of death or of bonds*. It is the opinion of Baronius, that he would have to appear, not only before the emperor, but before the senate and the pontifical college; in which he seems to have considered, that the case would have been treated as one affecting religion. But this is very uncertain. The persons in authority at Rome would have felt, like Festus, that the dispute between Paul and the Jews merely involved *certain questions of their own superstition*: and if the apostle's long confinement at Rome was caused at all by the machinations of the Jews, they would not have been likely to press those points, which concerned their own religion. They had represented him to Felix, as *a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition*; and they had perhaps wished to persuade him, as the Jews of Thessalonica said to the magistrates of that city, *these men are acting contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying, that there is another king, one Jesus*. An accusation such as this would have deserved investigation, and Festus

A. D. 56—58. perhaps mentioned it in the despatch which he sent with St. Paul to Rome. It is difficult to account for the length of time that elapsed before St. Paul was released; except that such delays appear to have been not unfrequent in the hearing of causes which came from distant provinces. He certainly made a defence, because he speaks of it in one of his own letters^f; but we are not told, that he addressed it to Nero himself; and it seems certain, that he made it not long before his release. We might perhaps conjecture, that the Jews were instrumental in keeping him so long a prisoner. At least we know, that the wish would not be wanting; and though they might not be able to allege any specific crime, their object was so far gained, if they could check for a time his more active exertions. I have stated, that soon after the removal of Felix, the Jews sent a deputation to accuse him to the emperor; and these men may perhaps have insinuated, that he had favoured a person, who was opposed to the Roman government. Felix himself was probably in Rome, when St. Paul arrived there; and it is difficult to say, what account he would have given the emperor of his extraordinary prisoner. His own opinion would certainly have been favourable: but at this time he would wish to conciliate the Jews, who were come to accuse him; and he may have helped to throw delays in the way of St. Paul making his defence. I have stated, that Felix was screened from punishment through the influence of Pallas; and though this favourite of fortune was no longer at the head of affairs, as he had been in the

^f Phil. i. 7.

former reign, he may have contrived to keep St. Paul from obtaining an hearing. A. D.
56—58.

It has sometimes been said, that the slight restraint, which was put upon St. Paul, and the facility, which he seems to have enjoyed of preaching the gospel, were owing to the personal character of Nero, who had not yet indulged in the crimes, which disgraced the later years of his reign. But the remark would not bear a strict examination. That an innocent man should be kept two years in prison, without having his cause heard, does not tell well for any government: and a young man, who at the age of seventeen is made sovereign of the whole civilized world, could hardly add cruelty to the list of his vices. It is true, that the Christians were not persecuted at the beginning of his reign: but it was because the calumnies against them were not generally known, and not because the emperor was disposed to protect them. He was a boy, when he came to the throne, but he was more than full grown in vice. In the second year of his reign he went about the city at night, committing the most disgraceful excesses; he shewed vulgarity, as well as licentiousness, in his amours; his conduct to his mother was most unnatural; and he caused his relation Britannicus to be poisoned. This will probably account, rather than any sounder and better feelings, for his giving no molestation to St. Paul. It was sufficient ill treatment to keep him so long in prison, without affording him a hearing: and it was the unrestrained indulgence of his passions, which made him thus inattentive to the ordinary affairs of state.

St. Paul, as I have observed, did not obtain an

A. D. 56—58. hearing, till after he had been a prisoner nearly two years; and he probably obtained this act of justice from the gospel having made its way with the persons employed about the court. If the Narcissus, who is mentioned by St. Paul ^g, was the celebrated freedman of Claudius, Christianity had found its way into the emperor's household three years before the arrival of the apostle; and some of these converts were probably people of rank. But the identity of these two persons must be considered a very doubtful point. It is more satisfactory to find St. Paul sending a salutation from *those of Cæsar's household* ^h; and though when he says, that *the whole prætorium* was made acquainted with his imprisonment, it is disputed whether he meant the emperor's palace, or the quarters of the prætorian guards, the expression in either of its senses must make us think highly of the progress of the gospel. Tacitus has perhaps supplied us with the name of one lady of rank, who embraced Christianity while St. Paul was in Rome. This was Pomponia Græcina, the wife of Plautus, the conqueror of Britain; who in the second year of the apostle's imprisonment is stated to have been "guilty of a foreign superstition ⁱ;" and the expressions of the historian have generally been taken to indicate that she had embraced Christianity. The Martyrologies mention Torpetes, who was attached to the emperor's household: but we know nothing more concerning him, except that he is said to have suffered martyrdom ^k. Much less credit is due to the notion, that

^g Rom. xvi. 11.

^h Phil. i. 12, 13. iv. 22.

ⁱ Annal. XIII. 32.

^k Martyrol. Rom. Maii 17.
Theodorus Metochita, a writer
of the thirteenth century, men-

Poppæa Sabina, one of the earliest of Nero's mis- A.D.
56—58.
tresses, was converted to the gospel. Josephus speaks of her as a woman of piety, because she sometimes had shewn a disposition to favour the Jews¹: but such a feeling was not unlikely to prejudice her against the Christians; and it is impossible to read the character given of her by Tacitus^m, without seeing that there was no period in her disgraceful life, when the gospel could be said to have made an impression upon her mind. If St. Paul, like the other prisoners, who came with him, had been committed to the care of the commander of the prætorian guards, he might have become acquainted with Burrus, who, as the tutor of Nero, still retained some influence over him; and though the apostle lived in his own hired house, he was subject, as I have stated, to military control, and may sometimes have been visited by the officers on guard. The soldier, to whom he was chained, and who was perhaps often relieved, may sufficiently account for his singular case becoming generally known. If Burrus had ever visited him, it is probable that Seneca would also have heard of him; and thus another chance would have been given of his obtaining an audience from the emperor. It is interesting even to know, that two such men as St. Paul and Seneca were living in Rome at the same time. We may perhaps go so far as to say, that if Seneca had heard of him, he would have made further inquiries; but the doubts and suspicions, which attach to this part of Seneca's history, should make us cautious how we

tions a cupbearer and a mistress of Nero, who were converted by St. Paul, p. 81.

¹ *Antiq.* XX. 8, 11.

^m *Annal.* XIII. 45.

A. D. 56—58. indulge in such suppositions. There certainly was a notion in early times, that the apostle and the philosopher were personally acquainted. It has even been said, that Seneca was secretly a Christian; a fact, which it seems impossible to reconcile with his writings; unless we ascribe to him also a degree of dissimulation, which no real Christian could possibly have practised. At the same time it must be allowed, (and the subject gives room for much curious investigation,) that the writings of Seneca present some remarkable coincidences with expressions used by St. Paulⁿ. The latter had written the greater number, and the most important, of his Epistles before he came to Rome; and it certainly was possible for Seneca to have seen them. To say more than this, would perhaps exceed the limits of judicious criticism: neither would we dwell much upon the probability, that Seneca may have heard something from his brother Gallio of St. Paul having been brought before him, when he was proconsul of Achaia. There seems, however, to be now but one opinion, that the letters, which are extant, and which professed to have been interchanged between St. Paul and Seneca, are spurious. They are mentioned by Jerom^o at the end of the fourth century, but not by any earlier writer. The earliest of them are supposed to have been written during these two years of St. Paul's imprisonment; and if they were genuine, we should learn not only, that Seneca was a convert to the doctrines of St. Paul, but that Nero also had expressed himself favourably of his writings. Whether the authority for these letters is altoge-

ⁿ Upon this subject I would refer to Fabricius, *Biblioth. Lat.* vol. II. p. 121.

^o Catal. Script. Eccles.

ther fictitious, or whether the forgery was grounded upon certain ancient traditions, is a point which perhaps each person will decide, according as his fancy leads him to think of the imprisonment of St. Paul ^p.

A. D.
56—58.

Whether Felix, or Pallas, or Burrus, or Seneca, interested themselves in any way in St. Paul's imprisonment, may still be considered doubtful: but we are perhaps justified in saying, that some persons, who had access to the court, were instrumental in obtaining him the hearing of his cause. I have stated, that this did not take place, till after he had been confined a long time, probably not long before his release, which took place in the middle of the year 58. We have seen, that during this interval he preached the gospel *with all confidence, no man forbidding him*: nor is there any thing, which would lead us to think, that he was at all ill-treated, except that in letters, which he wrote during his confinement, he speaks of Epaphras and Aristarchus as his fellow-prisoners ^q. He may perhaps have used the expression figuratively, or he may have alluded to their being sharers in some former imprisonment; but if he meant that at that time they were literally in confinement, we must suppose that for some period during these two years the gospel was persecuted. The persecution probably did not last long, nor affect many individuals. St. Paul himself speaks of some persons preaching Christ with a view to harass him ^r. These were perhaps the Jews, who wished the heathen to con-

^p The letters may be seen in Fabricius, *Cod. Apoc.* p. 880.
See Natalis Alexander, *Sæc. I.*

Synops. c. x. art. 3.

^q Philemon 23. Col. iv. 10.

^r Phil. i. 16.

A. D. 56—58. found Christianity with Gnosticism: and the scheme may in some degree have succeeded. If Simon Magus, as I have conjectured, had been to Rome before this time, and if his great success was obtained on his first visit, there must have been many persons in Rome, who had heard of Christ through this false philosophy. St. Paul seems rather to have rejoiced at this than otherwise. He felt confident, that the real doctrine concerning Christ would ultimately prevail: but if the Gnostics had already avowed the same licentious principles, which some of them professed afterwards, they may for a time have brought Christianity into disrepute: and Aristarchus and Epaphras may have been thrown into prison from some cause of this kind.

It is plain, however, that St. Paul had many other companions and fellow-labourers at Rome, who enjoyed their liberty. His friend Timothy, whom I have supposed to be left by him at Ephesus in the year 53, joined him while he was at Rome. If he came to him in the second year of his imprisonment, he had had four years for watching over his flock at Ephesus, and probably for visiting the other churches in Asia Minor. Tychicus also and Epaphras arrived at Rome from the same country; and the latter, who seems to have been a native of Colossæ, would bring him an account of his converts in Phrygia. According to the Martyrologies, Epaphras had been ordained bishop of Colossæ by St. Paul^s; and he is said to have suffered martyrdom in that city. Others represent him as bishop of Laodicea; all which must be considered extremely

^s See Usuard. Ado, Martyrol. Rom. ad Jul. 19.

uncertain. The principal churches in Phrygia, as I have already stated, were at Laodicea, Colossæ, and Hierapolis; and all of them appear at this time to have been affected by Gnosticism. The Jews, who had embraced that extravagant philosophy, had taught the Christians in those parts to adopt many of their superstitious observances; and St. Paul, who foresaw and deplored this increasing evil, though he was prevented from visiting them in person, took the most effectual measures for convincing them of their error. It was his intention to go thither himself as soon as he was released; and in the mean time he wrote letters, which might serve them for general instructions upon this and other subjects. He sent them by Tychicus, who was a native of Asia Minor, and probably of Ephesus. One of them seems to have been intended to be read in different churches. The bearer of it perhaps left a copy of it at Ephesus; and the celebrity of that city caused it to be considered as addressed particularly to the Ephesians. He then went on to Laodicea, and left another copy of it in that city; from whence a short day's journey would take him to Colossæ: and either to oblige Epaphras, or from the greater prevalence of Gnosticism among them, he sent a special letter to the Colossians, as well as an injunction to read the other, of which Tychicus was the bearer. Tychicus was also accompanied by Onesimus, who had been converted by St. Paul at Rome, and was now returning to his master Philemon, who lived at Colossæ. It appears, that he had left his master's service without leave, and like many other of his countrymen, had gone to Rome. His introduction to St. Paul may have been owing to Epaphras, who

A. D. 56—58. was acquainted with Philemon: and however this may have been, his journey to Rome was the most fortunate circumstance in his life. Having become a Christian, he took the opportunity of Tychicus returning to Asia Minor, and travelled with him to Colossæ. St. Paul gave him a letter to his master, and we cannot doubt, that he not only forgave him, but received him as a brother. Philemon had probably himself been converted by St. Paul during his journey through Phrygia in 46 or 48. He and his wife Appia lent their house for the accommodation of the Christians at Colossæ; and Theodoret^u speaks of having had it pointed out to him so late as the fifth century. It has been said, that Philemon was made bishop of Colossæ by St. Paul^x; an office, which, as I have stated, is ascribed by others to Epaphras: and this fact, as well as the subsequent martyrdom of himself and his wife at Colossæ, are perhaps deserving of very little belief. We know also the name of Archippus, who was a deacon in the Colossian church; and if ecclesiastical traditions may be followed, Onesimus was raised to a still higher station in the church. A person of this name was certainly bishop of Ephesus in the time of Ignatius^y; and some writers have stated, that Timothy was succeeded by the former slave of Philemon^z: but this must be considered uncertain; and unless Onesimus was extremely young, when converted by St. Paul in 57 or 58, he could hardly have been

^u Præf. in Ep. ad Philem.

^x Constit. Apost. VII. 46.
See also Menæa magna Græcorum, ad Nov. 22. Basili Me-
nolog. apud Ughellum, *Ital.*
Sacr. vol. VI. p. 1142.

^y Epist. ad Eph. §. 6.

^z The succession is said to
have been Timothy, John, Caius,
Onesimus. Others make the
disciple of St. Paul to have been
martyred A. D. 95. Feb. 15.

bishop of Ephesus at the beginning of the second century. Other accounts have represented him as bishop of Berœa in Macedonia; and they add, that he suffered martyrdom in the reign of Domitian^a. A. D.
56—58.

I should be inclined to think, that St. Paul wrote these Epistles in the summer of 57, or early in 58. He had also received accounts from other churches beside those of Asia Minor. Epaphroditus had been sent to him from Philippi: and he was the bearer of pecuniary assistance, which the Philippians now forwarded to him, as they had done upon a former occasion, soon after their conversion^b. Epaphroditus was taken ill after his arrival in Rome; and some time seems to have elapsed, before this communication was acknowledged by St. Paul. In the meanwhile he had made his defence^c; and though his sentence had not been pronounced, when he wrote to the Philippians, he seems to have known, that the issue would be favourable. As soon as Epaphroditus^d was recovered, he sent him back to Philippi as the bearer of a letter, in which he promised to send Timothy to them shortly, and also gave them hopes of visiting them himself^e. This was perhaps written after the others to Asia Minor, and not long before his own release. We might conjecture, that some of his other companions had now quitted Rome; and their anxiety for St. Paul's

^a See Const. Apost. VII. 46. Martyrol. ad Feb. 16.

^b Philipp. iv. 15—18.

^c Philipp. i. 7.

^d Some have conjectured, but with little reason, that this was the freedman and secretary of Nero, who was master of Epictetus. Tacit. *Annal.* XV.

55. Sueton. *Nero*, 49. Domit. 14

^e Theodoret calls Epaphroditus bishop of Philippi: (in Phil. iv. 18.) but there is no evidence of this. Others make him to have been bishop of Adriacum. Bolland. ad Mart. 22.

A. D. 56—58. personal safety being over, they had probably dispersed to continue their labours in different countries. Beside the persons whom I have mentioned, we know that Justus and Demas had also been with him; and two other names would excite particular attention, which are those of Mark and Luke. We have seen, that Luke was the companion of his voyage from Cæsarea to Rome; and we know that he was with the apostle when he wrote to the Asiatic churches^f. It might be conjectured, that Luke was no longer with him, when he wrote to the Philippians; or he would hardly have omitted to mention a name, which was so familiar and so dear to the converts in that city. Luke had perhaps himself gone to Philippi, from which place he had now been absent nearly five years. Some ancient traditions confirm the notion of his going from Rome into Greece; and Bœotia, Achaia, and Dalmatia, as well as Macedonia, are mentioned as the scene of his preaching. He is even stated to have visited Africa and Gaul: but all this is extremely uncertain; and it is only by conjecture, founded upon his former history, that I have imagined him to have gone in the year 58 to Philippi. In whatever direction he travelled, he probably carried with him the work, which he had composed in Rome during St. Paul's imprisonment; and which has come down to us under the name of the Acts of the Apostles. If he had written it later, he could hardly have failed to continue the history of St. Paul; and since he mentions his remaining two whole years at Rome, he could not have finished it, till those two

^f Col. iv. 14. Philemon 24.

years were expired. We seem therefore brought to the middle of the year 58, as the date of the Acts of the Apostles, a work, which might perhaps with equal propriety have been called a history of St. Paul. A. D.
56—58.

Mark also was with the apostle, when he wrote to the Asiatic churches, and he seems to have been intending to take a journey to Colossæ^g. I have already expressed my opinion that this person was not Mark the evangelist: but he was certainly the nephew of Barnabas; and twelve years had now elapsed, since we heard of his accompanying his uncle to Cyprus. It is pleasing to find, that the disagreement, whatever it might be, which led to the separation between St. Paul and himself thirteen years before, was now so entirely forgotten. Mark had perhaps in the interval been travelling with Barnabas; but at present, as I stated, he was at Rome, and had made preparations for going to Asia Minor.

Much discussion has been raised upon the question, whether St. Peter himself was at this time at Rome. It has even been debated, whether he ever visited Rome at all; and I cannot help thinking, that some protestant writers have weakened their cause by labouring to answer this latter question in the negative. There is, however, no satisfactory evidence, that St. Peter had been to Rome before the time of St. Paul leaving it in 58. I have stated, that no apostle seems to have visited Rome, when St. Paul wrote his Epistle to the Romans in 53: and he sends salutations to so many persons at the

^g Col. iv. 10. Philemon 24.

A. D. 56—58. end of that Epistle, that he would hardly have omitted St. Peter, if he had been at that time in Rome. By the same argument it might be inferred, that St. Peter was not at Rome, when St. Paul wrote his four Epistles during his imprisonment; or the name of his fellow apostle would have been mentioned in the salutations. Whatever may be said by Roman Catholic writers, the Fathers constantly speak of the Roman church being founded by St. Paul, as well as by St. Peter: and the work was probably ascribed to both of them, because they met in that city before their martyrdom. It is, however, much more correct to say, that the Roman church was founded by St. Paul: if, as I have endeavoured to shew, he visited Rome before St. Peter had been there. Though Christianity, as I have observed, had flourished at Rome for some years, there was properly no *church* there before St. Paul's arrival: though necessity would lead them to certain rites and regulations, they could have no elders or deacons ordained by the imposition of hands; nor was there any one person, as we have seen to be the case in Ephesus and Crete, who was appointed to watch over the whole. It is not probable, that St. Paul would leave Rome without arranging the church there on the same plan, which he had followed in other places: but we are deserted at this period by the inspired writers; and no point of ecclesiastical history is involved in so much perplexity and contradiction, as the succession of the early bishops of Rome. Some of this confusion has perhaps arisen from later writers assuming, that the first bishop was to date his accession from the death of St. Peter and St. Paul; whereas I have shewn,

that it was a regular custom with St. Paul, when he left any city where he founded a church, to commit the superintendence of it to one of the presbyters. The early writers are nearly unanimous in saying, that Linus was the first bishop of Rome after the apostles ; and his office is supposed to have begun, when St. Peter and St. Paul were martyred. This latter notion might be correct, if St. Peter himself held the see of Rome for so many years, as Roman Catholic writers have contended : but it is impossible for us to adopt it, if we believe that before the year 58 St. Peter had not been at Rome, and if we think, that St. Paul would not have left the Christians in that city without some person to direct them. It is not an improbable conjecture, that St. Paul committed the Roman church to Linus ; and it is somewhat remarkable, that most of the early writers state him to have held his office eleven or twelve years. Bishop Pearson supposes Linus to have died in the year 67, and therefore would shorten the period of his presiding over the Roman church : but if we reckon back from the year 67 to the year of St. Paul's release, we have an interval of ten years ; or if we go back two years more, to the date of St. Paul's arrival in Rome, we have exactly twelve years, which is the period assigned by some writers for the bishopric of Linus : and it is not improbable, that St. Paul's first care upon arriving at Rome was to select one person, who should take upon himself the temporal management of the church ; more especially as his own exertions were restrained by his being kept in partial confinement. I allow, that in all this statement there is much of conjecture : but beside being in itself not improbable, it is substan-

A. D.
56—58.

A. D. tially grounded upon the earliest traditions, and
58. enables us in some degree at least to reconcile those traditions with each other^h.

I shall assume, therefore, that St. Paul left Rome about the middle of the year 58, and that Linus, who had managed the church under his directions for the two last years, was now entrusted with the sole care of it. The scheme of chronology, which I have followed, allows at least six years for St. Paul's future labours: a period, which was probably full of interest to himself and to the gospel, but concerning which we know scarcely anything. His own expressions, which occur incidentally in his Epistles, are perhaps our safest guides: and it is difficult to say, whether the early writers merely followed these, or whether they had also the assistance of old and authentic traditions. St. Paul had expressed an intention five years before of visiting Spainⁱ: and it is probable, that he put it into execution: but if we are to judge of what he actually performed by what he says of his own intentions, we must conclude that the journey to Spain was postponed for the present, and that he travelled first into Greece and Asia Minor^k. He certainly intended

^h Irenæus says, that Peter and Paul, after having established the church of Rome, committed it to Linus. (III. 3, 3. p. 176.) Epiphanius states, that since Peter and Paul could not be always at Rome on account of the journeys which they were taking, it was necessary that the care of the Roman church should be committed to others. (Hær. XXVII. 6. p. 107.) So also Rufinus. The Apo-

stolical Constitutions say expressly, that Linus was ordained bishop of Rome by St. Paul before the death of St. Peter. (VII. 46.) See Natalis Alexander, Sæc. I. Diss. XIII.

ⁱ Rom. xv. 24, 28.

^k His journey to the east is supported by L. Cappellus, *Append. ad Hist. Apost.* p. 29: but he argues unnecessarily, that he did not *also* go to the West.

to go to Philippi; and he even asked Philemon to prepare him a lodging at Colossæ. This was a very natural route for him to take: and perhaps we are not going too far in supposing, that he visited these places on his way to Jerusalem. We have no evidence of St. Paul having gone to Judæa in the interval between his first and second imprisonment at Rome¹: but his former habits make the event probable; and it is difficult to conceive, that he would not have wished to see the land of his fathers, and the birthplace of the gospel, once more before he died. If the Epistle to the Hebrews was written at this time, as some critics have supposed, there is evidence that the writer of it intended shortly to visit Judæa^m. I assume, that it was addressed to the Jewish Christians of Palestine; and a careful examination of the question has led me to decide, that it was certainly written by St. Paulⁿ. If the date of it be rightly placed, the apostle was now released from imprisonment, and sent the letter from some place in Italy or Greece. He seems to have been expecting Timothy, who, as I have stated, had been with him at Rome during the greater part of the last two years. An expression in the letter might lead us to think that Timothy had been imprisoned; and since St. Paul had signified an intention of sending him to Philippi^o, it is possible, that his imprisonment may have taken place in some town of Greece^p. If St. Paul was himself in Greece, when

A.D.
58.

¹ It is said by Chrysostom, *præf. in ep. ad Heb.*

^m Heb. xiii. 23.

ⁿ See Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. I. p. 864.

^o Phil. ii. 19.

^p This is also the conjecture of Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. II. p. 262, 473.

A. D.
58.

he wrote to the Hebrews, he may have heard of this misfortune of his friend, and may then have been expecting his release. As soon as this took place, we may suppose that they travelled together, and went through Macedonia and Asia Minor to Jerusalem. The Christians in Judæa were probably at this time enjoying comparative peace. Festus was still the procurator; and his government was firm, though his measures against the banditti were frequently severe. Agrippa was endeavouring to raise himself to political importance; and his command of the temple and the priesthood gave him a pretext for having a residence in Jerusalem. Festus would be likely to watch his proceedings with jealousy; and if the Jews had raised any disturbance in venting their hatred against the Christians, it was the policy of the Romans immediately to suppress it. St. Paul therefore would probably find the Christians in a state of prosperity, if he visited Judæa in 58; but the storm was gathering in that unhappy country; and he knew by the spirit of prophecy, as well as by the signs of the times, that the predictions of his heavenly Master concerning the approaching calamities of Judæa were drawing to their fulfilment. The Epistle to the Hebrews contains many allusions to this season of tribulation: and one reason for the apostle going to Jerusalem at this time, might be found in his wishing to warn the Christians of the means which they were to take for their escape.

The journey of St. Paul into Spain has opened the way to much controversy. Clement, bishop of Rome, who wrote only a few years after the apostle's death, and had been personally known to him, speaks of

his having gone “to the extremity of the west^q:” and those persons, who think that such an expression would not have been applied to Rome, particularly by one who was then residing in that city, will quote the authority of Clement as decisive, that St. Paul went further to the west than Rome: and if so, the probability is greatly increased, that he went to Spain. The fact is asserted by Epiphanius, Chrysostom, Theodoret, and Jerom^r: and I have already observed, that St. Paul had probably six years in which he may have performed the journey. Theodoret adds, that he visited also the islands in the Mediterranean: and if he went or returned by sea, he was not unlikely to touch at those places. This journey, however, into Spain, has led to still greater controversy concerning the early introduction of Christianity into Gaul. It has been maintained that the apostle went by land, and followed the road over the Pyrenees, which led from Nice by Arles and Narbonne. Luke and Crescens are said to have been his companions; or at least to have been sent by him to preach the gospel in Gaul. Epiphanius is the only writer, who states this of Luke^s; and it has been doubted, whether even this testimony ought not to be restricted to Cisalpine Gaul. But it must be acknowledged, that the authority of Epiphanius is not sufficient to make us believe in any sense of the expression that Luke preached in Gaul^t. The notion of Crescens having gone into that country was perhaps founded upon the words of St. Paul,

^q Cap. 5.^r See Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. I. p. 867. Natalis Alexander, *Sæc. I. Diss. XIV.*^s Hær. LI. 11. p. 433.^t See Launoy, *Sulpitii Severi sententia de primis Galliæ martyribus vindicata* c. 17. p. 89. Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. II. p. 462.

A. D.
58.

where he speaks (according to our present copies) of Crescens having gone into Galatia^u: and it must be allowed, that there is good authority, particularly from the Fathers, for supposing St. Paul to have written *Gaul* rather than *Galatia*. Still, however, there is the same uncertainty as to Transalpine or Cisalpine Gaul being intended: and if this was the only mission of Crescens into that country, it is demonstrable, that he was not travelling in company with the apostle; and St. Paul's journey into Gaul remains as uncertain as before^x. A namesake of the apostle is also said to have attended him, and to have remained at Narbonne^y. Nor was this the only channel, by which the gospel is stated to have found its way into France. We need not stop to consider the palpable fiction of Mary Magdalene, with the two other Maries and Lazarus, going by sea to Marseilles soon after the martyrdom of Stephen, and of Lazarus presiding over the church of Marseilles for thirty years. Such fables will now find few if any supporters^z. It is perhaps worthy of more attention, that the church of Arles has claimed some precedence over the other churches, as being founded by Trophimus^a: and this person, who is meant to be the Ephesian, who accompanied

^u 2 Tim. iv. 10.

^x The name of Crescens is connected with the churches of Vienne, Mayence, and Cologne: but the tradition is altogether rejected by Launoy, *de duobus Dionysiis*, tom. II. p. 41. Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. I. p. 877. It is supported by Natalis Alexander, *Sæc. I. Diss. XV.*

^y See Bolland. ad Mart. 22.

p. 371. Natalis Alexander, *Sæc. I. Diss. XV.*

^z It is defended at much length by Natalis Alexander, *Sæc. I. Diss. XVI.* But see Launoy, *de Magdalena, Lazari &c. in Provinciam appulsu.*

^a See Baronius, ad an. 61. §. 4. Bolland. ad Feb. 1. p. 81. Ado Viennens. ad an. 59. Natalis Alexander, *Sæc. I. Diss. XV.*

St. Paul to Jerusalem, is said to have received his commission for preaching in Gaul from St. Peter. Other persons are mentioned as having founded churches in that country, who were sent by the chief of the apostles. We read of Martialis at Limoges^b, Saturninus at Thoulouse, Gatianus at Tours^c, and others. St. Peter himself has never been claimed as having travelled into France: but beside St. Paul, the apostle Philip^d is stated to have preached the gospel in that country, and even in Britain. Dionysius the Areopagite has also been named as taking a principal share in the conversion of the Gauls. The scene of his preaching is not confined, like that of the persons named above, to the Romanized provinces of Narbonne, and Aquitain; but he is stated to have penetrated even as far as Paris, where he suffered martyrdom: and whatever may be the truth of his history, many French writers have believed their patron saint to be the Athenian who was converted by St. Paul^e: others, however, have advanced good reasons for believing, that Dionysius the first bishop of Paris did not visit that country till the reign of Decius^f.

A. D.
58.

Such are some of the traditions concerning the introduction of Christianity into France; and where there is such an absence of ancient authority, and such an evident rivalry between churches which claim to be founded by apostles, there is the great-

^b See Natalis Alexander, Sæc. I. Diss. XV.

^c Gregor. Turon. *de glor. Confess.* c. 4.

^d Pseudo-Isidor. *de vit. et mort. Sanct.* But see Launoy, *de Sulp.* ut supra, p. 92, 95.

Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. I. p. 1153.

^e See Natalis Alexander, Sæc. I. Diss. XV. H. Menardus, *de unico Dionysio*.

^f See Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. II. p. 434.

A. D.
58.

est reason for caution, perhaps for incredulity. Still, however, I cannot think it unreasonable to believe, that the gospel was known in France at least as early as the reign of Nero. The Roman character of the towns in Provence, and their ready communication by sea with Italy and the whole of the Mediterranean, might lead us to think, that Christianity could not long have continued unknown there. If St. Paul went by land from Italy into Spain, I should say, that the fact of his preaching in Gaul can hardly be denied. The great object of his heart, or I might say, the great business of his life, was to plant the gospel, where no seeds of it had as yet been sown. He says of himself, that he was *debtor both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians*; and if he survived his first imprisonment at Rome by so much as six years, the cities in the south of Gaul and in Spain were by no means unlikely to benefit by his labours. I would not perhaps altogether reject the tradition of Crescens or Trophimus having been left in charge of some of the cities in Provence: and we shall see that early in the second century the gospel had made considerable progress in that country.

The journey of St. Paul into Spain, and his preaching in Gaul, are connected with another question, which is of more interest to ourselves; that is, whether he also passed over into Britain, and planted the gospel in this island. The expression quoted above from Clement, of St. Paul having gone to the extremity of the west, and which I have said may fairly be taken in support of the notion of his having visited Spain, has also been insisted on as a proof of his having preached in Britain. But such

an inference, to say the least of it, is extremely uncertain. On the other hand the evidence appears to me irresistible, that toward the end of the second century Christianity had penetrated into very remote parts of the British isles: and persons will perhaps argue differently as to the length of time which was required from its first introduction. Eusebius, who wrote in the former part of the fourth century, certainly mentions Britain as one of the distant countries, which was visited by the apostles^g; but he does not mention any particular apostle: and the first writer, who names St. Paul, is Theodoret, who wrote at the beginning of the fifth century^h. We may therefore say, that in the fourth century there was a tradition of Christianity being preached in Britain by some of the apostles: but even the traditionary evidence in favour of St. Paul is such as sound criticism can hardly accept. Eusebius must not be quoted for this part of the story. He certainly believed, that the Britons were converted as early as the apostolic age; but there is as much reason to think, that he would have ascribed the work to St. Philip, as to St. Paul. I have mentioned the tradition of St. Philip having preached in Gaul: and Isidorus of Hispala, a writer of the sixth century, who has been quoted as stating this fact, might seem also to allude to Britain, when he speaks of the same apostle enlightening “barbarous nations, which bordered upon darkness, and were bounded by the swelling oceanⁱ.” A tradition, which is even so weakly supported as this, is not perhaps to be classed

^g Dem. Evang. III. 5. p. 112.

^h De Cur. Græc. IX.

ⁱ De vita et morte Sancto-

rum, c. 74. This work is considered to be spurious.

A. D.
58.

with the idle legend of Joseph of Arimathea founding a church at Glastonbury^k, or of Claudia the daughter of Caractacus carrying back Christianity from Rome into her father's territories. But it is singular, that Joseph of Arimathea and his twelve companions are said to have been sent to Britain by St. Philip; so that this apostle's name was certainly connected in early times with the conversion of our island. Upon the whole I would say, as in the case of France, that at the time, when St. Paul might have visited Britain, i. e. in the reign of Nero, there is nothing unreasonable in supposing, that the gospel might have been known there. That it was introduced by St. Paul, appears to me a very gratuitous assumption: but there is reason to think, that at this time eleven other apostles were travelling in different countries for the sole purpose of propagating the gospel; and unless we think, that Britain was too obscure a place to attract their notice, we might perhaps believe, without undue credulity, that St. Philip or some other of the apostles crossed over from Gaul, and preached the gospel in this country.

If the journey of St. Paul into Spain be denied, we have no alternative but to confess our utter ignorance of his proceedings for the last six or eight years of his life: and the journey, even if it be allowed, will fill up but a small portion of that period. The ecclesiastical history of the remaining part of the first century is extremely imperfect. A few scattered notices, unconnected as to time and place, must henceforth satisfy our inquiries: and I shall con-

^k See Bolland. ad Mart. 17. p. 509.

clude this Lecture with relating an event of some importance, which happened in Judæa. A. D.
62.

I have conjectured, that under the firm administration of Festus, the Christians in Palestine were comparatively free from molestation : and the statement is confirmed by what took place soon after his decease. He died in the eighth year of the reign of Nero ; and as soon as the news of his death arrived at Rome, Albinus was appointed to succeed him. Some time however elapsed, before the new procurator reached his government ; and the high priest took advantage of the interregnum to persecute the Christians. The office of high priest had been frequently changed about this period. Agrippa, who still resided at Jerusalem, had lately appointed Joseph, and shortly after Ananus, or Annas, the son of the Annas, whose name is connected with the crucifixion of our Saviour. This was the fifth of his sons, beside his son-in-law Caiaphas, who had held the pontifical dignity ; and the present high priest, being a Sadducee, had probably additional motives for shewing hostility to the Christians. His plan of attack, though iniquitous and cruel, was certainly well conceived. The blow was aimed at once at the head and leader of the party ; and the Easter of the year sixty-two is generally taken to be the period, when James the bishop of Jerusalem was martyred. The atrocious act is alluded to by Josephus¹, and was related in much detail by Hegesippus, a Christian historian of the second century. His account has been preserved to us by Eusebius^m; and though some parts of it have an air of fiction, we may perhaps believe the following circumstances to be sub-

¹ Antiq. XX. 9, 1.

^m H. E. II. 23.

A. D. 62. ^{stantially trueⁿ.} The religion of Jesus had now for some years been spreading rapidly in Jerusalem, and many persons of consequence had embraced the gospel. The death of Festus seemed to give to the unbelieving party a greater licence of acting; and their object was plainly developed, when they applied to James, as a person of great weight and influence, and asked him to undeceive the people, who were so eagerly running after the new religion. James was placed upon an elevated part of the temple, and was ordered to address himself to the multitudes, who were attracted by the festival in the courts below. Ananus and his party could hardly have hoped, that James would so suddenly retract his opinions; there can be no doubt, that they only sought a public opportunity for putting him to death; and their wishes were shortly gratified. Instead of dissuading the people from following Jesus, he spoke of him in terms, which at once shewed his belief and veneration of him; upon which the persons, who had placed him there, hastened to the spot, and threw him down. Others were ready below to stone him, and when he still survived, and was praying for his murderers, a person out of the crowd despatched him with a fuller's club.

Such was the tragical end of James the Just, the first bishop of Jerusalem, after he had watched over the Christian church in that city for thirty years^o. It seems most probable, that he was not employed, like the other apostles, in converting distant nations. The Christians of Judæa were committed to

ⁿ See Le Clerc, *Hist. Eccles. duorum primorum Sæc.* p. 414. own system of chronology; and it is exactly confirmed by Je-

^o This is the result of my rom, *de vir. illust.* c. 2.

his peculiar care: but he has also left a proof of the interest which he took in his brethren of every country, if, as there is the greatest reason to believe, he was author of the Epistle which bears his name¹. The Epistle of James is addressed to the twelve tribes dispersed throughout the world; by which of course we are to understand the Christians in any of the twelve tribes. James must have seen many of these persons, when they attended the festivals: and the resident head of the Christian church at Jerusalem was a very fit person to send a circular letter to the Jewish Christians in different countries. With respect to the date of this Epistle, I should be inclined to fix it late: probably not long before the martyrdom of the writer. It contains allusions to the approaching trials, which the Christians were to suffer; and there are expressions in it, which seem to be directed against Gnostic errors. James must have witnessed the effect of this false philosophy in the neighbouring country of Samaria, where Simon Magus, as I have stated, met with great success. That impostor perverted the doctrines of the gospel; and probably quoted St. Paul, as saying, that good works were of no importance. I have conjectured, that Simon was at Rome about the time of St. Paul addressing his Epistle to the Christians of that city. He may himself have seen that Epistle, and may have spread a false account of it upon his return shortly after to Samaria. The bishop of Jerusalem would feel himself called upon to repress an evil, which came so near: and we thus arrive at a probable cause, as well as an approximation to a date, of the catholic Epistle of James. It was perhaps

A. D.
62.

¹ See Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. I. p. 1024, 1147.

A. D.
62.

written between the year 53, when St. Paul wrote to the Romans, and the year 62, when James himself was put to death. His death happened, as I have said, at the time of the Passover; and Josephus adds, that some of the Jews sent to Albinus, who was then on his way from Alexandria, complaining of this illegal conduct of the high priest. Albinus threatened him with his displeasure; and Agrippa, who was always glad to shew his authority, made it a pretext for displacing Ananus, and appointing Jesus, the son of Damnaeus. There is no reason to think, that either Albinus or Agrippa were actuated by any partiality to the Christians. The assumption of judicial power in the absence of the Procurator was looked upon as a dangerous precedent; and any open act of persecution was perhaps for a time repressed. The Christians proceeded to repair the loss they had sustained: and Symeon, one of the brothers of James, became the second bishop of Jerusalem. Eusebius states in his history, that all the surviving apostles met for the purpose of this election; and that Symeon was unanimously chosen by them, and by the relations of our Lord. It is added by a later writer^q, that he had ventured openly to reproach the Jews for their cruelty to his brother. If any of the apostles were at this time in Judæa, they probably had a share in making this appointment: but there is reason to think, that for some years they had been engaged in distant countries; and Symeon was probably chosen by the elders of the church at Jerusalem, as being brother to their martyred bishop, and himself a relation of our Lord. Eusebius has preserved a fragment of

^q Epiphanius, *Hær.* LXXVIII. 14. p. 1046.

Hegesippus, a writer of the second century, from which it would appear, that another person of the name of Thebuthis had wished to be elected to this office: and that from disappointment at seeing Symeon preferred before him, he began to attract a party, and to introduce new opinions into the church^r. It is not, however, certain, whether this did not happen upon the death of Symeon, who lived as late as the year 107: and a fitter opportunity will occur hereafter for considering the heresies, which arose after this time in the Jewish church.

A. D.
62.

^r Eus. *H. E.* IV. 22. Hegesippus, as his words are here quoted, seems to have placed the discontent of Thebuthis after the death of James: but there appears to be something corrupt or missing in the narrative: and we can hardly re-

concile this quotation with another from the same passage, unless we suppose Hegesippus to have been speaking of the death of Symeon. He is so understood by Baronius ad an. cix. §. 2, 4.

LECTURE X.

A. D. 62. **T**HE same year, which witnessed the martyrdom of James, the bishop of Jerusalem, is also marked by the death of another person of note, who is sometimes mentioned as the bishop of another of the principal sees. This was the evangelist St. Mark, who is said to have founded the church of Alexandria, and to have been succeeded in the eighth year of Nero by Annianus, who is sometimes called the second, and sometimes the first bishop of that see. With respect to Annianus being placed at the head of the Alexandrian church in the year 61 or 62, I should be inclined to receive the tradition as true; and perhaps he was appointed upon the death of St. Mark; but the expressions of some early writers would equally allow us to infer, that St. Mark merely left the care of the church to Annianus, as soon as he had sufficiently settled its affairs^a. The question is intimately connected with the identity of John, surnamed Mark, the companion of Paul and Barnabas, with Mark the evangelist, the companion of St. Peter: for St. Paul, in the letter, which he wrote to Timothy not long before his death, perhaps about the year 65, tells him to bring Mark with him^b; and it is plain, that this Mark

^a See Eus. *H. E.* II. 24. Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. II. p. 169, &c.
^b 2 Tim. iv. 11.

was not then bishop of Alexandria; whereas Mark the evangelist is stated to have died at Alexandria in the year 61 or 62. We must therefore either give up the identity of these two persons; or we must conclude, that Mark the evangelist left Alexandria in the year 62, and resumed his former occupation of ministering to the different churches. I have already professed myself favourable to the first of these two opinions; and the chronological difficulty just stated perhaps furnishes an additional reason for adopting it.

A. D.
62.

The earliest and most respectable writers do not say any thing of the martyrdom of St. Mark: but it is mentioned with some detail in Roman and Greek martyrologies; and the tradition is entitled to some consideration. That he was connected with the first establishment of the Alexandrian church, is supported by such a concurrence of ancient testimony, that I shall assume it as an historical fact: and it is also highly probable, that he either accomplished this work in conjunction with St. Peter, or was sent by that apostle to undertake it. If Mark the evangelist was not the person, who accompanied Paul and Barnabas, we know nothing of his early history from the New Testament^c; except that he seems to be the person mentioned by St. Peter in his first Epistle, where he calls him *his son*^d. This would perhaps lead us to infer, that St. Peter was his spiritual father, or in other words, had converted

^c Epiphanius is the earliest, and almost the only ancient writer, who says that he was one of the seventy disciples. (Hær. LI. 6. p. 428.) Papias, who wrote early in the second

century, says expressly that he was not: (apud Eus. H. E. III. 39.) and he is followed by Tertullian, Theodoret, Augustin, &c.

^d 1 Pet. v. 13.

A. D. him to Christianity: and ecclesiastical writers are
 62. unanimous in representing St. Mark as the companion of St. Peter.

I have already alluded to the scanty evidence which we have of the apostolical labours of St. Peter; and his journey to Rome is one of the points, which has led to most controversy. I have given reasons for thinking, that St. Peter had not visited Rome at the period of St. Paul's release in 58: but it is not improbable, that he went thither shortly after. This is not the commonly received opinion: but it is one, which is not positively inconsistent with any ancient testimony, and it may perhaps enable us to reconcile some difficulties. In the first place, St. Peter and St. Paul are frequently mentioned as the joint founders of the Roman church; and since they seem not to have been there together, except at the time of their martyrdom, the work could only be ascribed to both of them, if one followed the other, and finished what was already begun. I would conjecture, therefore, that St. Peter came to Rome in the summer of 58, either just before or shortly after St. Paul was released from confinement; and there is good evidence for saying, that St. Mark was the companion of St. Peter in this visit to Rome. There was a tradition at the beginning of the fourth century, that St. Peter encountered Simon Magus, while he was in that city^e; and I should be inclined to believe the fact, though the date of it is uncertain. The meeting either took place now, or a few years later, when St. Peter was again in Rome and accompanied by St. Paul. The story has been embellished by so many mar-

^e Arnobius, l. II. p. 50.

vellous circumstances, that some critics have rejected it altogether: but after having given the subject the most mature consideration, I cannot help concluding, that this would be to carry our scepticism too far. That Simon Magus pretended to work miracles, is stated not only by the Fathers, but by St. Luke^f: and when we read of his challenging St. Peter to a trial of their powers, and of his attempting to fly through the air, I cannot see that the story is at all at variance with what we know of this impostor, and of the times in which he lived. It is singular, that heathen writers have preserved an account of a person attempting to fly in the reign of Nero, and being killed in the attempt^g: and though I would not connect this story with that of Simon Magus, it at least shews, that there is no improbability in supposing a person to have attempted to fly in the reign of Nero. We are told that Simon Magus undertook such an exploit, and he seems to have made use of a fiery chariot for his perilous excursion: but St. Peter, who was present, having addressed his prayers to God, the impostor fell to the ground, and broke both his legs. It is added, that he afterwards destroyed himself, through shame and vexation, by falling from the top of a house. Some persons will perhaps still think, that the whole of this narration is to be rejected as a fable: but I cannot help repeating that the outline of it is probably true; and that at some time or other St. Peter exposed a false miracle of Simon Magus at Rome, and was the cause of his death^h. According to Eu-

A. D.
62.

^f Acts viii. 9.

12. Juvenal. III. 79.

^g Dio Chrys. Or. XXI. p. 371. ed. 1604. Suetonius, *Nero*

^h See Bampton Lectures, note 41.

A. D.
62.

sebius, the result of this encounter was the extinction of Simon's popularity, and of the circulation given to his doctrine at Rome: and there certainly is reason to believe, that the Roman church continued for a long time particularly free from heresy.

Another interesting circumstance is mentioned by Eusebiusⁱ, who tells us, that St. Peter met the celebrated Jewish writer Philo, while he was at Rome. There is no chronological difficulty attending such a supposition; and a mind like Philo's could not have failed to be attracted by the doctrines of the gospel. But throughout the whole of his voluminous writings there is no allusion whatever to the Christians; and the fact of his meeting with St. Peter can only be received as a probable, though unsupported tradition.

We have more circumstantial evidence for connecting the publication of St. Mark's Gospel with the preaching of St. Peter at Rome. Many writers have conceived, that St. Mark published his Gospel soon after the death of St. Peter and St. Paul: but they do not seem to notice the difficulty which arises from the death of St. Mark being placed in the year 62, while the two apostles did not suffer till some years later. If we suppose St. Peter to have visited Rome about the year 58, this difficulty vanishes; and nearly all the ancient traditions concerning St. Mark's Gospel may be reconciled. I should conceive St. Peter not to have remained long in Rome at this time; and before his departure, the disciples requested Mark to put down in writing the substance of the apostle's preaching. St. Peter is said

ⁱ H. E. II. 17.

to have seen and approved of what he wrote^k; so that the work comes to us upon the highest apostolical authority. What I have said of the inspiration of St. Luke, will also apply to the case of St. Mark, who had perhaps for several years been accompanying St. Peter, and constantly receiving spiritual assistance for preaching the gospel. If I was right in assigning the year 55 for the finishing of St. Luke's Gospel, it is possible that St. Mark may have seen it before he wrote his own. But St. Luke composed it for the special use of Theophilus, who is supposed to have lived at Antioch: and unless he brought another copy of it when he came to Rome, it may not have been much circulated in that city. At all events experience tells us, that authors are not deterred from publishing, because their works have been anticipated. It was evidently the object of St. Mark to give the converts at Rome a short manual of the miracles and discourses of our Lord: and since he was going to travel into other countries, he may have preferred taking with him his own work, rather than the more elaborate composition of St. Luke. He is said by more than one ancient writer to have carried his Gospel into Egypt: and this leads us to what I have already anticipated in his history, the foundation of the church at Alexandria.

It is perhaps not asserted by any ancient writer, that St. Peter was ever in Egypt. There would indeed be indisputable evidence of it, if we could be certain, that the Babylon, from which he dates his first Epistle, was situated in Egypt: but this will

A. D.
62.

^k Papias apud Eus. *H. E.* i. p. 174. Clem. Alex. apud III. 39. Ib. II. 15. Irenæus III. Eus. *H. E.* VI. 14.

A. D.
62.

perhaps for ever remain a doubtful point. In ancient times it was generally conceived, that the expression was a figurative one, and that Rome was the place intended. Of modern writers, those who have not adopted this notion, have rather inclined to the celebrated city upon the Euphrates: but Pearson¹ and a few others have argued in favour of a place of that name in Egypt. The question is of little importance, except as furnishing a fact in the scanty history of St. Peter: and without pretending to decide, where such great authorities have differed, I cannot help observing, that there is much reason for thinking the Egyptian Babylon to be intended. There is certainly some traditional evidence for supposing St. Peter to have sent St. Mark to preach the gospel in Alexandria^m: and on the whole I should be inclined to conclude, that St. Peter himself visited Egypt. The date of his journey may be fixed about the year 58 or 59, and when he was leaving the country, he perhaps wrote his first Epistle from Babylon, a town near Heliopolis, which was addressed to the Christians in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, i. e. Ionia, and Bithynia. Mark was then with him, as was also Silvanus, who was perhaps the same person that travelled with St. Paul in his second journey. We have heard nothing of Silas or Silvanus since the year 47, when he was residing with St. Paul at Corinth: but since we have no trace of his attending St. Paul in his subsequent journeys, we may perhaps conclude, that he staid some time longer at Corinth, and afterwards joined St. Peter.

Though I have supposed St. Peter to have preached

¹ De Success. I. 8. 3.

^m See the authorities in Lardner.

in Egypt, we must perhaps assume, that he did not visit Alexandria. If he had, it could hardly have happened, that the Alexandrian Christians would not have claimed him as the founder of their church; whereas the ancient writers are unanimous in ascribing its foundation to St. Mark. The event, whenever it happened, was a very important one for the interests of Christianity. The believers in that city far surpassed all others in learning; and they seem from very early times to have established schools for the instruction of the converts. When the precedence of the patriarchal sees came to be settled, Alexandria obtained the second rankⁿ: and since it was not the seat of empire like Rome, and Jerusalem and Antioch had both preceded it in receiving the gospel, it could only have held this place from its superior celebrity. I have supposed St. Peter to have gone to Egypt, accompanied by St. Mark, somewhere about the year 58; and perhaps it was then, that the latter was sent to preach at Alexandria. We need not however suppose, that the gospel had not been heard of in Egypt till that time. Some Egyptian Jews were among the multitudes who were present at Jerusalem, when the Holy Ghost first came upon the apostles; and they may have carried back the new doctrines to their brethren at home. It seems certain, that the gospel spread rapidly in Alexandria: and Eusebius^o might be quoted in proof of this assertion; though the passage, to which I allude, contains perhaps a re-

A. D.
62.

ⁿ These were Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem. Justinian.
^o H. E. II. 17. See Bampton Lectures, note 32. Constantinople was added by

A. D. 62. markable instance of false reasoning and historical incorrectness.

It was the opinion of Eusebius, (and in this he has been followed by other writers,) that the persons, who are described by Philo Judæus under the name of *Therapeutæ*, were Christians in the neighbourhood of Alexandria, who were converted by St. Mark. Other writers have identified the *Therapeutæ* with the Essenes, of whom they suppose them to have been a branch; and have distinguished them by the name of Contemplative Essenes. But we may say of these two opinions, that the former is undoubtedly incorrect, and the latter is probably so. The Essenes were a Jewish sect, and were found only in Palestine: but Philo by no means says, that the *Therapeutæ* were Jews; and though they were most numerous in Egypt, they were to be met with in every quarter of the world. They were most conspicuous for habits of great austerity and self-mortification; and Eusebius, who knew that many Christians led an ascetic life in his own day, and particularly in Egypt, was led incautiously to conclude, that the *Therapeutæ* of Philo were Christians. It is not improbable, that the religion and literature of the Alexandrian Jews had some share in forming the mystical system of the *Therapeutæ*; but there is no reason whatever for connecting their opinions with the early propagation of the gospel. It is most likely that they were in existence before any apostle or evangelist visited Egypt: and they may be traced to that eclectic school of philosophy, which I have already mentioned as having long been gaining ground in Alexandria, and which I

also stated to be the immediate parent of Gnosticism. Though I entirely agree with those persons, who suppose Philo to have made no allusion whatever to the Christians, I would by no means assert, that many of the Therapeutæ did not embrace Christianity, as soon as it was offered to them. There was much in their habits and principles, which prepared the way for the reception of the gospel. Monachism certainly took its rise in Egypt: and though the name of *monks* was of much later introduction, there is evidence of some Christians bearing the name of *ascetics* from the earliest times^p. The Egyptian Therapeutæ may have been the beginners of this system: and if the picture drawn of them by Philo be accurate, it is almost impossible to conceive, that they could hear the doctrines of the gospel without being affected by them. It is not the province of history to indulge in conjecture, or we might reasonably conclude, that St. Mark himself came in contact with the Therapeutæ, and brought many of them over to believe in Christ. The fact of his preaching in Alexandria, as I have already stated, is supported by such a concurrence of evidence, that it can hardly be doubted: but beyond this we know little concerning him. Even the time of his first visiting Egypt is involved in uncertainty. Eusebius would seem to place it in the first year of the reign of Claudius^q; but it is much more probable that his visit was later, and he perhaps went there for the first time at the beginning of the reign of Nero. He is said to have preached first in the neighbourhood of Cyrene, and afterwards to have gone to Egypt. In both places

A. D.
62.

^p See Suicer v. ἀσκήτης.

^q In Chron.

A. D.
62.

he met with great success; and the Alexandrian church, as I have already stated, has always considered him as its founder. He is sometimes called the first bishop of that see: but other writers, who probably looked upon him as an apostle rather than as an ordinary pastor, have begun the succession of Alexandrian bishops with the person who succeeded him. This is very generally said to have been Annianus, and the date of his appointment is fixed in the year 62, or in the eighth year of Nero. It is possible, that he may have been appointed, when St. Mark left Alexandria to visit some other country: but it is generally supposed, that St. Mark died in that year; and there are accounts, which speak with some detail of his having suffered martyrdom^r. All this, however, is extremely uncertain; and ecclesiastical history allows us to say little more, than that the personal history of St. Mark ends in the year 62, and that in this same year the church of Alexandria was committed to the care of Annianus.

We must now turn from the Christians in that part of the world to an affair of still greater importance, to the first scene in that series of tragedies which henceforward were exhibited at Rome. I have already lamented, that the ecclesiastical history of this period consists only of a few unconnected incidents: and the order of time requires us now to follow the two great apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul, to the close of their eventful lives.

When St. Paul was released in 58, he probably travelled, as I have conjectured, through Greece and

^r For all these traditions of St. Mark's visiting Egypt, see Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tit. St. Marc.

Asia Minor to Jerusalem. A period of eight years may then be allowed for his visiting Spain, or any other countries. If we take the words of Eusebius literally, that all the apostles were present at Jerusalem in the year 62, when a successor was chosen to James, we might suppose that St. Paul had again visited that city: nor is it at all improbable, that he made several journeys to Jerusalem between his release from imprisonment at Rome and his death. The calamities of Judæa were now hastening to their catastrophe. Albinus, as I have stated, succeeded Festus as Procurator in 62; and though avaricious and rapacious, he contrived not to exasperate the Jews to any flagrant acts of opposition. In 65 he was succeeded by Gessius Florus; and this man, according to Josephus, made even the government of Albinus to be remembered with regret^s. The following year, which was the twelfth of Nero, is always mentioned as that, in which the Jewish war broke out; though it is difficult to say when a storm begins, which has long been heard at a distance. From this time the opposition to the Roman arms in Jerusalem was open and unceasing; and it is consoling to the ecclesiastical historian, that he is not obliged to dwell in detail upon this succession of horrors. It is impossible, however, to suppose, that the Christians were unconcerned spectators of the Jewish war; and if we were supplied with materials, we might perhaps have many interesting anecdotes to relate, in which the Christians were actors or sufferers. Some of them, who were still zealous for their ancient institutions, and who united faith in Christ with obedience to the Law, may have been

A. D.
66.

^s Antiq. XX. 11, 1.

A. D.
66.

found in the ranks of the patriots or rebels, by whichever name we may call them; and at the beginning of the insurrection, Christian blood may have been shed in Jerusalem. We have the assurance, however, of our Saviour himself, that this calamity, if it took place at all, did not last long^t. The picture, which he drew of this appalling warfare in the spirit of prophecy, may be taken as an historical document; to every part and every line of which, the narrative of Josephus is a commentary and illustration. Our Saviour's mysterious warnings were perhaps not understood, or not fully believed, at the time, by his doubting disciples; but when the horrors, which he predicted, were rapidly and fearfully coming to pass, the advice, which he gave, would also flash upon their minds. It was not long before this period, that I conceive St. Matthew to have published his Gospel. I am aware, that a much earlier date is assigned to it by some critics^u: but Irenæus, who is the earliest writer upon the subject, says expressly, that Matthew wrote his Gospel, while Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome, and founding the church there^x: and I have shewn, that this expression, if taken literally, cannot be applied to an earlier period than the year 58. Most of the ancient authorities support this date, rather than the earlier one, which modern critics have assigned to St. Matthew's Gospel: and if he did not publish it till the beginning of the reign of Nero, we may account for his recording in such detail the predictions of our Saviour concerning the siege and destruction of Jerusalem. The inspired evangelist could discern

^t Matt. xxiv. 22.

^u See the authorities in Lardner.

^x III. i. p. 174.

the signs of the times ; and he wished to remind his Christian countrymen, that they were to save themselves by a timely flight. The interest, with which St. Matthew's Gospel was read, will appear much greater, if we suppose it to have been written, when wars and rumours of wars, when famines and pestilences and earthquakes, which were to be *the beginning of sorrows*, were already actually felt : and those impressive words, *whoso readeth let him understand*, were well calculated to persuade every believer in Christ, that the evil was *near, even at the doors*. We know from history, that the salutary warning was not thrown away. Whether our Saviour meant his words to be taken literally, that *not a hair of their head should perish* ; (Luke xxi. 18.) and whether, as some writers have asserted, not a single Christian perished in the siege of Jerusalem, may perhaps be doubted : but the prophetic exhortation, *Let them which are in Judæa flee to the mountains ; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out*, was certainly followed by a great multitude of Christians. Josephus himself informs us, that after the defeat of Cestius Gallus, which happened in 66, and which committed the Jews beyond the power of conciliation, many of the most considerable of the people forsook the city^y. He of course does not mention the Christians : but it was probably at this time, if not before, that many of them had begun *to flee to the mountains* : and we are told by Eusebius^z and Epiphanius^a, that they retired to a city called Pella, on the eastern side of

A. D.
66.

^y De Bel. Jud. II. 20, 1.

^z H. E. III. 5.

^a Hær. XXIX. 7. p. 123.

XXX. 2. p. 126. See Baierus, de migratione Christianorum in Pellam.

A. D.
66.

the Jordan. There can be no doubt that Symeon, who was now bishop of Jerusalem, was one of the fugitives. We shall have occasion to consider hereafter the Jewish Christians at Pella: and for the present it will be sufficient to state, what is asserted by some writers, and is not in itself improbable, that many of the Jews were induced to embrace the gospel, upon seeing the evident interference of Providence in the preservation of the Christians.

It might seem almost certain, that St. Paul did not visit Jerusalem after the year 66. His presence could be of no use in the devoted city, which was now deserted by all those, for whom he felt most anxious: and it is generally supposed, that in the year 67 he went for the second time to Rome. He certainly approached this city from the East. He had been not long before at Miletus^b and Troas^c, and perhaps at Corinth^d; so that we might not unreasonably conclude, that in this which was his last journey, he had again visited his churches in Asia Minor, and in Greece. If this were so, he did not go to Rome as a prisoner, though he was perhaps put into prison not long after his arrival: and though we are not informed of any circumstances which led to his apprehension, and in fact we know nothing of his personal history at this eventful crisis, there is too certain evidence of the Roman church being at this time in a state of severe trial.

A. D.
64.

It was in the middle of the year 64, that ten out of the fourteen regions, into which Rome was divided, were almost entirely destroyed by fire: and Nero, as is well known, was more than suspected of

^b 2 Tim. iv. 20.

^c iv. 13.

^d iv. 20.

having caused the terrible disaster. It was in vain, that he had recourse to acts of popular liberality, or that he made a show of propitiating the gods by public expiations : the general voice still accused him of the deed, and he sought to exculpate himself by finding other objects for their suspicion and their revenge. It is now for the first time, that the name of *Christian* occurs in the pages of Tacitus^c : and the reader is astonished to find, that the emperor Nero and the followers of Christ were accused of the same crime. It is plain that Tacitus, though grossly prejudiced against the Christians, did not in this instance believe them to be guilty ; and their innocence of this atrocious act seems to have been generally allowed : but still the punishments, which they suffered, are not stated to have been unpopular ; and their inhuman treatment might seem to have rather furnished amusement to the citizens of Rome. The cause and the progress of this feeling of antipathy are not exactly developed by any historian. We have not hitherto seen any regular system of persecution on the part of the people or the government. In the year 46 St. Paul was imprisoned at Philippi, for introducing customs which were contrary to those of Rome : and in 52 the silversmiths of Ephesus were able to raise a tumult against him, because the gospel interfered with their private gains. We may suppose that feelings such as these, particularly the last, were not confined to Philippi or Ephesus ; and while the gospel continued to spread, it may have met with many similar attacks, which have not been recorded. But still there is no evidence of the Roman government having shewn any

A. D.
64.

^c Annal. XV. 44.

A. D.
64.

hostility to the Christians till the reign of Nero: and this emperor has always enjoyed the “bad pre-eminence” of being the first who set on foot a regular persecution. But this was perhaps owing to the instigation of those about him, rather than to any feelings or principles of his own. When St. Paul was imprisoned for the first time in the year 56, there is no evidence of the emperor being at all prejudiced against him or his opinions; and it would rather appear that during those two years the gospel met with little opposition in Rome. In the interval between his release in 58, and the burning of the city in 64, something seems to have happened, which had made the Christians to be objects of more general dislike. We know indeed, that when St. Paul arrived there in 56, he was told that the Christians were *every where spoken against*^f: but it was the Jews who made this remark; and perhaps they spared no pains in imparting their own prejudices to their heathen neighbours. Still, however, the government or the people of Rome would require other and more tangible grounds of dislike, than those which were connected with the Law of Moses. These were perhaps furnished by persons interested, like Demetrius, in the expensive pageantry of heathen superstition: and if the gospel continued to make much progress in Rome, it would be opposed by persons who were neither few nor without influence at court, the priests and soothsayers, who, while they complained of the temples losing their votaries, were really in dread of their own revenues being materially diminished. Other and very powerful causes may be found in the calumnies, which are

^f Acts xxviii. 22.

known to have been spread at this time against the Christians. They were accused of Atheism, which was perhaps not unnatural, since they held in abhorrence the numerous deities of Pagan superstition; and this was a charge, which the interested persons alluded to above would be most industrious to spread. But their moral as well as their religious principles were assailed by the most malignant rumours. The horrid and disgusting crimes, with which the poets have connected the names of Œdipus and Thyestes, became almost proverbial as being practised by the Christians. Their love-feasts, and perhaps the celebration of the eucharist, may have given some countenance to these reports: but it would hardly be credited, if we did not find the early apologists refuting the imputation, that they were charged, not only with promiscuous intercourse with their mothers and sisters, but with serving up the flesh of newborn infants at their mysterious banquets. An addiction to magic might seem a trifling charge after others of such an atrocious character: and it could hardly have been this, which made the Christians so unpopular, when persons of every rank, and even the emperor himself, were known to indulge in this superstition. When Tacitus is describing their persecution under Nero, he states that they were convicted of hating the whole human race; a charge, which perhaps arose from their withdrawing themselves from many occupations and employments, which brought them in contact with heathenism. It was perhaps the same principle, which caused them to be reproached as indolent and useless members of society; and this alone, without the other and more flagrant criminalities, would be sufficient

A. D.
64.

A. D. 64. to make the people of Rome indifferent, if not willing spectators of their sufferings^g.

The reader will perhaps feel surprise, that such improbable calumnies should have been believed; and that the lives of the Christians did not immediately refute them. This is perhaps to be explained by a recurrence to what I have already stated of Simon Magus and the Gnostics. That impostor was at Rome in the reign of Claudius, and perhaps returned to it again after the release of St. Paul from his imprisonment. There is reason to think, that Gnosticism was by this time beginning to take deep root: and though the Fathers have perhaps been too vehement in vilifying the Gnostics, there is evidence that nearly all the crimes, of which the Christians were accused, were committed in some degree by the Gnostics. They were notoriously addicted to magic; and though one division of them practised great austerities, there were others who plunged without restraint into the grossest and most licentious profligacy. Unhappily the Gnostics had introduced the name of Christ into their absurd and fabulous theology: and it was perhaps the rapid success of the gospel, which led them to borrow, though in a distorted form, the rites and ceremonies of the Christians. Hence the heathen at Rome, who were not careful to make distinctions in "foreign superstitions," and who for a long time confounded the Christians with the Jews, committed a similar error with respect to the Christians and the Gnostics. In this way Christianity was brought into discredit by the immoralities of persons, who were not

^g For the calumnies against my Bampton Lectures, note the Christians, I may refer to 63.

really Christians: and when Nero was seeking for some other channel, into which he might turn the popular suspicions against himself, it was perhaps suggested to him by those who were interested in pagan worship, that the people would willingly listen to any calumny against the Christians^h. They were accordingly accused of having set fire to the city. The emperor's gardens were used as a circus for the occasion; and the remorseless tyrant disgraced himself and human nature by taking part in the games, while the Christians were tortured by new and barbarous inventions to furnish amusement for the populace of Rome. Humanity shudders to hear of these innocent victims being enclosed in the skins of beasts, that they might be torn in pieces by dogs; or covered with pitch and other inflammable materials, that they might serve as torches to dispel the darkness of the nightⁱ. We have no means of estimating the number of these early martyrs. Tacitus, who was then a boy about seven years of age, and was perhaps taken to see the spectacle, speaks of the sufferers as *a great multitude*: and his narrative, beside giving an authentic account of this first persecution, is also a convincing proof of the progress which Christianity had made at Rome.

If the Fathers may be believed, we are also in possession of the fact, that the Gnostics, who were in one sense the cause of these sufferings by being confounded with the Christians, contrived themselves

^h It is expressly said by Melito, a writer of the second century, that Nero and Domitian were prejudiced against the Christians *ὑπὸ τινων βασιλέων ἀνθρώπων*. Reliq. Sacr.

vol. I. p. 111.

ⁱ Concerning these tortures, see a work written by Gallo-nius, Antwerp 1668: and by Sagittarius, Jena 1673.

A. D. 64. to escape. Nothing is said by Tacitus of the Christians being required, as a test of their belief, to join in some act of heathen worship: but we know that this was the established practice in later persecutions, and it is highly probable, that the alternative was offered them on this occasion. The notion indeed rests on more than conjecture, if it was now that Simon Magus instructed his followers, that there was no harm in saving their lives by worshipping an idol^k. We are assured, that this convenient doctrine was a characteristic of the Simonians and other Gnostics: and though it is not certain, whether Simon himself was at this time living or no, we may conclude, that his followers escaped death by a compromise which every Christian looked upon with abhorrence^l.

The extent and the duration of this first persecution of Nero have led to much discussion. Sulpitius Severus is the earliest writer, who speaks in positive terms of the emperor having issued edicts by which the profession of Christianity was forbidden in all the provinces of the empire. The martyrologies supply accounts of persons having suffered in Tuscany, at Milan, and other places, in consequence of these decrees. Evidence has been adduced of the persecution having extended into Spain^m: but every authority, which has been alleged, particularly the last, is attended with circumstances of suspicion; and criticism is compelled to acknow-

^k Origen. *cont. Cels.* VI. 11. p. 638.

^l Bampton Lectures, note 64.

^m See Gruter, *Inscript.* p.

ccxxxviii. n. 9. Ferreras, *Hist. generale d'Espagne*, tom. I. p. 192. Mosheim, *de rebus ante Const.* Cent. I. §. 35. not. n.

ledge, that there are no sufficient grounds for extending these early martyrdoms beyond the precincts of the cityⁿ. It was not the interest of Nero to keep the question of the burning of Rome a long time in agitation: and as soon as the emperor and his subjects had sufficiently amused themselves with the shrieks and sufferings of the Christians, it is probable that this public persecution of them ceased. The discovery, however, had now been made, that the Christians were not likely to resist: many persons, as I have already stated, were interested in suppressing them; and the concluding history of St. Paul is a sufficient proof, that the machinations of their enemies were occasionally successful.

A. D.
64.

I have mentioned, that St. Paul is supposed to have gone to Rome for the second time in the year 67; but there is no reason for concluding that he did not arrive there a year or two earlier^o. He appears to have been at liberty on his journey to that city: and it was perhaps the suffering state of the Roman church, which caused him again to visit it. The Gnostic heresy was also beginning to be more than ever formidable to the Christians; not only from their being confounded together by the heathen, and the innocent party made to suffer for the guilty; but St. Paul foresaw that the subtlety of the Gnostics would soon succeed in drawing away many from the church. This had apparently been

A. D,
67—68.

ⁿ See Balduin, *Comm. ad. edict. imp. in Christianos*, p. 27. Launoy, *Diss. qua Sulpitii Severi locus vindicatur*, sect. I. p. 139. tom. II. part. I. Dodwell, *Diss. Cyprian*. XI. §. 13. p. 59.

^o See a letter of Vignoles in

Masson's *Hist. critique de la rep. des lettres*, tom. VIII. p. 74. tom. IX. p. 172. Tillemont, *Hist. des Empereurs*, tom. I. p. 564. Baratier, *de Success. Rom. Pont.* c. V. p. 60.

A. D. 67—68. the case to a considerable degree in Asia Minor before this journey of St. Paul to Rome. His friend Timothy was still left at the head of the Ephesian converts; and he had many enemies to contend with, who either openly attacked, or secretly undermined the faith of his flock. St. Paul would probably find the Roman church but partially recovered from the effects of Nero's persecution. The fiery trial had, however, purified it; and the constancy of those who survived would be likely to attract new converts, while the Gnostics, who had saved themselves by a shameful dissimulation, would be obliged for a time to carry on the deception, and to keep their principles concealed. I have conjectured, that the Roman church had been committed to the care of Linus at the time of St. Paul's first imprisonment. We know nothing of his conduct or his adventures during the perilous time of the persecution; but he certainly survived it, and was in Rome at least some time after the arrival of St. Paul^p. The names of Eubulus^q and Pudens^r are also preserved, as connected with the Roman church; and traditions are still extant, which would assign to them a high place in the catalogue of Saints. All these accounts, however, are to be received with suspicion; and the fact of their being mentioned by St. Paul is perhaps the only authentic evidence in their favour. St. Paul had other companions with him at first, whose names are not now mentioned for the first time. Erastus and Trophimus had staid behind on the journey: but Titus, Tychicus, Demas, and Luke were with him at Rome. The cause of his being

^p 2 Tim. iv. 21.

^q Bolland. Feb. 28.

^r Ib. Mai. 19. Baron. Anal. ad an. 44. §. 61.

put a second time in confinement is not authentically stated. There are accounts, which trace it to the resentment of Nero at having one of his mistresses converted by the preaching of the apostle^s: according to other and less credible authority, it was the conversion of Proculus, one of his cupbearers, which drove him to this act of injustice^t. Such particulars as these must be received with great caution. If St. Paul came to Rome in the year 67, the emperor was probably absent. He was certainly in Achaia in that year, and did not return to Italy till the January of 68^u. Helius was appointed governor of Rome during his absence: and according to some accounts it was under this officer that the apostle was put to death. We may perhaps conclude, that it was the boldness and the success of his preaching, which caused him to be thrown into prison: and whether this step was taken by order of the emperor or his deputy, the enemies of the Christians seem to have succeeded in raising a warm persecution. During his former imprisonment, it was the interest of the Jews to keep him in confinement, and to hinder him from making his defence. But his opponents were now of a different kind; and their ferocious master had given them a taste for blood. The apostle was called to make a public defence^w, and for that time he escaped: but he was only reserved for a protracted imprisonment, and his doom was probably determined. Some time after his defence, he wrote to Timothy, and his letter bears the

A. D.
67—68.

^s Chrysost. *contra vitup. vit. monast.* lib. I. Ambros. *in Auxent.*

doubtedly fictitious.

^u See Brotier, Supplement. ad Tac. An. XVI.

^t This rests only on the Acts of Linus, a work which is un-

^w 2 Tim. iv. 16.

A. D. 67—68. marks of a man who was not only prepared, but expected speedily to suffer. He entreated Timothy to come to him before winter; and history has not informed us, whether the two friends met again in this world. The work of persecution had evidently waxed hot in Rome. Most of the apostle's companions had left him. We need not suppose that all of them were merely actuated by motives of fear. They may have felt, that there was no good in exposing themselves uselessly to danger; and at the present crisis their exertions might be more successful in less troubled quarters. Demas is certainly spoken of by the apostle as having forsaken him from worldly motives^x; but the journey of Crescens to Galatia, and of Titus to Dalmatia, would perhaps have been undertaken under any circumstances. We have heard nothing of Dalmatia in the previous history of the gospel. St. Paul may have visited it in the interval between his two imprisonments; or Christianity may have reached it from the neighbouring country of Macedonia. The Dalmatians were now visited by Titus, who, when we last heard of him, was acting under St. Paul as head of the churches in Crete. Whether this island was another of the places, which St. Paul had lately visited, is a doubtful point. If he did, he probably took Titus with him in his voyage to Rome; and we may hope that the state of the Cretan churches was such, that their bishop could leave them for a while without anxiety. This is the last authentic event in the history of Titus. He is said to have re-

^x He is said to have become a priest in a heathen temple at Thessalonica; but it is probably a calumny. See Bampton Lectures, note 79

turned again to Crete, and to have died there, which is not improbable^y: but many marvellous stories are added, which are wholly undeserving of credit. I have already alluded to the doubt, whether Crescens went to Galatia or to Gaul. It would be interesting, if the latter reading could be established; since we should then know upon authority which could not be disputed, that Christianity had at this time made its way into Gaul: but on the whole there seems more reason for concluding, that the journey of Crescens was made to the Christians of Galatia. Luke still continued the faithful companion of St. Paul, as he had been in his former imprisonment. We are not told, whether he was himself at present in the same condition: but the confinement of the apostle seems to have been of a very different nature from the gentle restraint which he had experienced ten years before. Onesiphorus, who followed him to Rome, had great difficulty in finding him^z: and if the tradition could be depended upon, which points to the Mamertine prison at the foot of the Capitol, his condition was probably one of extreme wretchedness.

The fact of St. Peter being also at Rome at this time is one, which has led to much controversy: but the ancient testimony appears to me so strong and so unanimous, that I cannot entertain a doubt, that St. Peter as well as St. Paul suffered martyrdom at Rome. Some writers have asserted, that the two apostles reached the city together, and for some time assisted each other in preaching the gospel. But there are difficulties in such a statement, which can hardly be surmounted: and it seems to me impos-

^y See Bolland. ad Jun. 4.

^z 2 Tim. i. 17.

A. D. 67—68. sible to suppose, that St. Peter was at Rome, when St. Paul wrote his second Epistle to Timothy. I should therefore conclude, that he arrived in Rome after St. Paul, and not till the latter had been thrown into prison. According to the conjecture which I have hazarded, St. Peter had visited Rome about the year 58, or a little later; and we know nothing certain of his proceedings since that time. There seems good evidence for saying, that he was once at least at Corinth^a, and that his visit was subsequent to that of St. Paul. If his first Epistle was written from Babylon in Egypt, he also preached in that country: but it is by no means demonstrated, that he did not write it in the neighbourhood of the celebrated Babylon on the Euphrates. If the persons addressed in his first Epistle were the inhabitants of countries, which he had himself visited, we may extend his travels to nearly the whole of Asia Minor^b; and this is perhaps the nearest approximation which we can make to the personal history of St. Peter. I should conclude, that his second Epistle was not written from Rome; but as it was certainly written not long before his death^c, he probably composed it, when he had decided upon the journey to Rome, which he knew would be his last. Most writers have placed the combat between Simon Magus and St. Peter about this period. I have stated, that on the whole I should be inclined to believe the meeting to have taken place, and that the result was in some manner disadvantageous to Simon Magus: but the affair may have happened in a former visit of St. Peter to Rome; and there is little reason to

^a Dionysius Corinth. apud
Eus. *H. E.* II. 25.

^b See 1 Pet. i. 1.
^c 2 Pet. i. 14.

suppose, that the apostle's imprisonment was owing to the resentment of Nero for the defeat of Simon Magus. It is singular, that another celebrated impostor was probably in Rome at this same period. This was Apollonius of Tyana, whom I have already mentioned as having perhaps visited Ephesus during some part of St. Paul's residence there. I also stated, that his biographer Philostratus evidently wished to set up Apollonius as a rival to Jesus Christ; and the incredible miracles, which are ascribed to him, are no small proof of the fame which had then been obtained by the Christian miracles. Apollonius is said to have performed some of these wonders during this visit to Rome; and it is to be regretted that we know nothing of so interesting a scene, as the meeting between the two apostles and this celebrated impostor.

A. D.
67—68.

We cannot however tell, whether either of the two apostles was then in possession of his liberty. I have conjectured, that St. Paul was imprisoned previous to the arrival of St. Peter: and it was perhaps not long, before the latter shared the same fate. Tradition has assigned to both the apostles the same miserable confinement in the Mamertine prisons; and some particulars are added, (which partake too much of the marvellous,) of their having converted the two jailors to embrace Christianity^d. It might be expected that this part of the history of St. Peter would be embellished by Roman writers; and though few stories have been oftener repeated than that of his escaping from prison, and being induced to return by an apparition of his heavenly Master, it can hardly be said to rest upon sufficient

^d See Baronius ad an. 68. No. 23.

A. D. 67—68. authority. In these cases it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to separate truth from fiction; and there is perhaps danger of our going too far on the side of scepticism. On the whole, I should be inclined to listen to the tradition of the two apostles having suffered martyrdom on the same day; and though there is this material difference in the accounts, that some suppose a year to have intervened between the two events, yet the coincidence of their suffering on the same day is still noticed in almost every tradition upon the subject. The weight of evidence is certainly in favour of their having suffered on the same day, and in the same year: and though the precise date is by no means settled by chronologists, we are perhaps not far from the truth, if we say generally, that their martyrdom took place in the year 67 or 68. I should also be inclined to believe, that St. Paul was beheaded; a distinction which was perhaps observed in consideration of his being a Roman citizen; while St. Peter, who had not the same privilege to plead, was sentenced to the more ignominious punishment of crucifixion. It is the respectable testimony of Origen, which adds the interesting fact, that he was crucified with his head downwards in pursuance of his own request^e: and Clement of Alexandria, a still earlier writer, speaks of St. Peter seeing his wife led out to martyrdom, and encouraging her to bear the trial^f. It will perhaps be thought, that such legends as these should be carefully distinguished from authentic history: but it should be added, that the authority of Clement and Origen is to be distin-

^e Apud Eus. *H. E.* III. 1.

^f *Ib.* 30.

guished with equal carefulness from that of spurious A. D.
acts and Roman martyrologies. On the same prin- 67—68.
ciple I cannot but consider the evidence as most respectable, which states St. Paul to have been buried without the walls on the road to Ostia, and St. Peter on the hill of the Vatican^g. That their tombs were shewn in these two places as early as the second century, is not a matter of speculation, but of history: and it will hardly be said, that superstition and credulity had combined at that time to countenance similar deceptions.

The martyrdom of the two great apostles has led me into details, which are perhaps more suited for biography than for history: but though we should wish to know the general state of the Roman church at that period, and the circumstances which led to the death of the apostles, we have few or no materials for drawing the melancholy picture. If we could trust the legendary tales of later writers, we might record the names of other persons who were put to death at this time by Nero for professing Christianity. There is still the same uncertainty as before concerning the extent of the persecution; and it is again said to have been felt in the provinces, as well as in the capital. Of this, however, there is very little evidence; and since Nero himself died in the June of 68, and the last year of his reign was disturbed by insurrections in Spain and Gaul, we may perhaps conclude, that the death of the two apostles was not only the most remarkable, but the closing scene of this eventful tragedy. There is some reason to think, that Linus, to whom the Roman church had been committed for some years, received

^g Apud Eus. *H. E.* II. 25.

A. D. 67—68. his crown of martyrdom in the same persecution, and before St. Peter and St. Paul. His history, and particularly the chronological part of it, is involved, as I have observed, in great obscurity. According to some authors he did not suffer till after the reign of Nero: but if we are to believe in any sense, that his two immediate successors were appointed by St. Peter and St. Paul, we can hardly doubt that Linus was put to death before the two apostles. Pearson gives reasons for fixing his martyrdom in the year 67: and it seems nearly certain that the person, who succeeded him as head of the Roman church, was Anencletus. If we suppose Linus to have suffered soon after the date of St. Paul's second Epistle to Timothy, it is very possible for Anencletus to have been appointed by St. Peter who arrived soon after, with the concurrence of St. Paul who was then in prison. Pearson supposes, that Anencletus survived but a short time, and that he died in 69; and though the generality of writers have assigned a longer period to his ministry, there are perhaps fewer difficulties in adopting the shorter chronology. There is certainly some evidence, that Clement, who is called the third bishop of Rome, received his appointment from St. Peter^h; but this can hardly be taken to mean, that St. Peter survived Anencletus as well as Linus. We know from St. Paul's own words, that Clement was his fellow-labourer as early as the year 58; and if he was by birth a Roman, as some authors have asserted, it is not unlikely, that the two apostles named him as a fit person to succeed Anencletus, in case he should be suddenly cut off. Though it is perhaps impossible to reconcile

^h Tertul. *de Præscript.* 32. p. 213. Const. Apost. VII. 46.

all the traditions upon the subject, we may at least infer from them the great anxiety of St. Peter and St. Paul not to leave the Christians of Rome, as sheep without a shepherdⁱ. They knew that their own course was shortly to be finished, and that many churches, which they had planted and watered, would soon be deprived of their superintendence. They had the satisfaction of leaving that of Rome in zealous and faithful hands: and without aiming at greater accuracy, we may perhaps assert, that when the two apostles were martyred, Anencletus was at the head of the Roman church, and the person next in authority to him was Clement^k.

ⁱ Chrysostom gives this as the reason for St. Paul calling Timothy and others to Rome shortly before his death. In

² Tim. Hom. X.

^k For the succession of Clement, see Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. II. p. 480.

LECTURE XI.

A. D. 70. WE are now arrived at a period in the history of the church, which may perhaps be called the most critical since the ascension of Jesus Christ into heaven. The apostles were then left to themselves: they were to preach the gospel to every creature; and the Master, who had given them this command, had now departed from them. Their situation was sufficiently trying, and their task, according to human ideas, was hopeless. But we are now arrived at a period, when the apostles themselves were almost all withdrawn by death from their earthly labours. The martyrdom of St. Peter and St. Paul would itself form a memorable epoch in the history of the church: but there is reason to believe, that at the same period very few of the other apostles were living. St. John certainly survived to the end of the century: and it has been thought that the Epistle of St. Jude was not written till after the death of nearly all the apostles.

It has perhaps often created surprise, that we know so little of the history of these persons. The *Acts of the Apostles*, as they are called, might with equal propriety be termed the first part of the life of St. Paul. The same work has also supplied us with a few events in the history of St. Peter; and something more may be collected of this apostle from

credible ecclesiastical traditions : but with these two exceptions, to which must be added the account of St. James's martyrdom in the year 44, we know very little of the personal history of all the other apostles. If we could admit the evidence of supposititious acts and martyrologies, the ignorance, of which I have complained, would in a great measure be removed : and it might be rash to assert that these works, which though of a doubtful, are frequently of an early date, have not been the means of preserving traditions, which are really founded on truth. This, however, only brings us back to the same uncertainty as before ; and the alternative is offered of either knowing nothing, or not knowing what to believe. The most ancient, and perhaps the most credible tradition, is that preserved by Eusebius upon the authority of Origen. This writer, who lived in the third century, beside speaking of Peter, and Paul, and John, mentions also Thomas and Andrew. He says, that Thomas preached in Parthia, and Andrew in Scythia^a. The statement of Thomas having preached in Parthia is repeated by other writers^b : and the different nations which were subject to the Persian, or as it was then called, the Parthian dominion, are said to have had the benefit of his preaching. He is reported to have visited Ethiopia ; by which we are perhaps to understand the eastern part of Arabia : and more than one ancient writer has stated that he travelled into India^c. This latter tradition has appeared to re-

A. D.
70.

^a Eus. H. E. III. 1.

Serm. IX.

^b Sophron. apud Hieron. *de Script.* Theodoret. *de Leg.*

^c Greg. Naz. *Hom. ad Arian.* Nicephor. II. 40.

A. D. 70.

ceive some support in modern times by the interesting researches, which have brought to light some Christian inhabitants on the coast of Malabar; and we are told that these persons appeal to the apostle Thomas as their founder. There are, however, reasons to doubt the accuracy of this tradition. Theodoret^d speaks of Thomas, a disciple of Manes, who carried his Master's doctrines into India; and since the religion of Christ always formed part of Manicheism, it is possible, that this Thomas may have been confounded with the apostle. There is also evidence of another Thomas having been sent about the year 800 by the patriarch of Babylon to carry the gospel into India^e: and since the Christians, who have lately been discovered in that country, are Nestorians, it is not improbable, that the Nestorian patriarchs of Babylon were the original founders of their church. There is therefore very little evidence of the apostle Thomas having penetrated as far as India, if we take that term in its literal signification: but the tradition, which Origen had heard in the third century, may perhaps incline us to believe, that the gospel was carried by this apostle into the interior of Asia. On the same principle I would admit the still earlier tradition, preserved by Clement of Alexandria^f, that Thomas the apostle did not suffer martyrdom: and the stories, which are told of his being put to death and buried in India, do not rest on any authority. Rufinus, who wrote at the end of the fourth century, states positively that his body was at Edessa, a city on the

^d Hær. Fab. I. 26.

l'Eglise, tom. I. p. 240.

^e Le Seur, Histoire de ^f Strom. IV. p. 595.

east bank of the Euphrates^g; and this is another confirmation of his having preached in Parthia. A. D.
70.

The mention of Edessa may bring to our recollection the story of Abgarus, a king who lived in that city, being cured of a disorder, and many of his subjects being converted, by Thaddæus, one of the seventy disciples, who was despatched for that purpose by St. Thomas. The story is rendered more incredible by its being added, that Abgarus had written a letter to our Saviour, and had received an answer, in which it was promised, that after the ascension of Jesus into heaven he would send a person to cure the king of his disorder. The letter and the answer have been preserved by different writers, though the copies present considerable variations: and some persons, even in modern times, have been inclined to receive them as genuine. They are mentioned by no writer earlier than Eusebius; and it is perhaps owing to his giving them a place in his history, that they found in ancient times so many defenders. Eusebius states positively, that he extracted his account from the archives of Edessa, having translated the original document from the language of the country into Greek^h. I am unwilling to believe, that Eusebius did not in this instance adhere strictly to truth: but it seems impossible not to add, that his judgment and sagacity were on this occasion deficient, and that the people of Edessa had deposited a forgery in their archives. The circumstances of the story would lead us to believe, that the cure of Abgarus happened very soon after the ascension of Jesus Christ: but I omitted

^g Hist. Eccles. II. 5 See VI. 18.
also Socrates, IV. 18. Sozom. ^h H. E. I. 13.

A. D.
70.

all mention of such an event in its proper place, because I cannot but look upon the whole of this correspondence as a fictionⁱ: and I should not have alluded to it now, if it had not been connected with the history of the apostle Thomas: and again I would observe, that the tradition of his having preached beyond the Euphrates, and of his body being interred at Edessa, receives some confirmation from this otherwise improbable story. Christianity undoubtedly flourished at Edessa in very early times. This city was a kind of metropolis of the Christians in that part of Asia: and if the old Syriac version of the New Testament was made in the first century, as some critics have supposed, the conjecture is not improbable, that the translation was made at Edessa^k.

The tradition quoted above from Origen mentions also, that St. Andrew preached the gospel in Scythia; and I should be inclined to receive the statement as true, though the expression is a vague one, and the ancients would have spoken of any part of the north of Europe as Scythia. Other writers have stated with more exactness, that he preached in the country called Sogdiana, and in the neighbourhood of Cholcis upon the Euxine^l. A church is also said to have been founded by him at Byzantium: but there is no evidence of any authority, which should incline us to believe it^m. There is perhaps more room for discussion, whether

ⁱ See Ittigius, Diss. I. de sect. 8.

Pseudepigraphis, p. 97. Pritius, *Introd. in lect. N. T.* p. 11.

Lardner, vol. VI. p. 596. Jones *on the Canon*, vol. II. p. 1.

^k Michaelis *Introd. c. VII.*

^l Sophron. apud Hieron. *de Script.*

^m Nicephor. II. 39. See Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. I. p. 1056.

he did not latterly alter the direction of his travels, and visit different parts of Greece. The testimony, though not very early, is at least respectable, for his having preached in Epirus and Achaiaⁿ: and there is a constant tradition of his having been crucified at Patræ in Achaia, of which place he was bishop, by order of the proconsul^o. The Greeks of Constantinople certainly believed that his body was removed to that city from Patræ about the year 357: and this is at least a proof that the tradition of his having preached in Achaia was current in the fourth century.

It might perhaps be thought, that Origen had not met with a tradition concerning any other of the apostles, or he would have mentioned it together with those which relate to Thomas and Andrew. We in fact have little ancient evidence concerning any of these persons: and it is only the peculiar interest which attaches to their history, that would justify our paying attention to so many uncertain traditions. Among the other apostles, the evangelist St. Matthew may perhaps claim a prominent place in our investigations: but it is only from writers of the fourth and fifth centuries that we hear of his preaching in Ethiopia^p: and it is doubtful whether they intended the country of that name in Africa or Asia. Eusebius had heard of his travelling beyond Judæa^q, but he does not name any particular country: and he adds, that it was just before his setting out on this journey, that he un-

ⁿ Theodoret. in *Psalm*. cxvi.
 Greg. Naz. *Orat.* XXV. Hieron. *Epist.* CXLVIII.

^o Nicephor. II. 39.

^p Rufinus X. 9. Socrates I. 19.

^q H. E. III. 24.

A. D.
70.

dertook to write his gospel for the use of his countrymen. I have already expressed my opinion, that St. Matthew's Gospel was published when the troubles in Judæa were becoming more alarming, and not long before the commencement of the war. The notion of its being written in Hebrew, or at least in the language of Palestine, is supported by the authority of Papias^r, who though confessedly a man of not much judgment, might almost from his date have conversed with some of the apostles. That one at least of the three Gospels should have been translated very early into Syriac, if it was not originally written in that language, is certainly not improbable: and tradition might lead us to think, that St. Matthew's Gospel had been thus translated. Still however it is a remarkable fact, that not one of the Fathers has spoken of having seen this translation. Pantænus, who lived in the second century, is said to have found a copy of it in India, which had been left in that country by the apostle Bartholomew^s. But though Eusebius apparently believed this tradition, he has not mentioned the authority on which it rests; and the improbability of a Hebrew or Syriac copy of this Gospel being of any use in India will perhaps incline us to reject it altogether. Jerom certainly speaks of having seen a copy of this Hebrew Gospel in the library of Cæsarea, and of possessing another himself^t: but it seems almost certain, that he confounded the Gospel of St. Matthew with a spurious work entitled the Gospel of the Hebrews. If there was any good evidence of the Hebrew copy having been in existence, we might

^r Apud Eus. *H. E.* III. ult.

^s Eus. *H. E.* V. 10.

^t Catal. in *Mat.* In Pelagian. III. 1.

A. D.
70.

perhaps believe, that St. Matthew had himself written in both languages: but though other persons are mentioned as having translated it into Greek, there is no evidence but that of conjecture, which would incline us to adopt such a notion. Clement of Alexandria has preserved a tradition, that St. Matthew led a life of great abstemiousness^u: and he also quotes an earlier writer, who says that he did not meet his death by martyrdom^x.

In this account of St. Matthew, I have mentioned incidentally, that the apostle Bartholomew is said to have preached in India; and if Eusebius gave this anecdote on the authority of Pantænus himself, it is certainly entitled to some credit; since Pantænus visited the same country after an interval of not more than one hundred years: but the evidence of later writers would rather incline us to understand by India the country to the south of Persia, and perhaps Arabia Felix^y. The manner as well as the date of this apostle's death, though many different statements are given in the martyrologies, must for this very account be looked upon as altogether uncertain.

There is, however, scarcely any room for doubt, that Philip the apostle lived for some time, and finally died, at Hierapolis in Phrygia, where his body was interred. The fact is expressly asserted by Papias^z, who lived early enough to have conversed with St. John, if not with Philip himself; and what enhances his testimony still further, he was himself bishop of Hierapolis. We have also

^u Pædag. II. 1. p. 174. ^x Strom. IV. p. 595. ^y See Rufinus, X. 9. Socrates, I. 19. ^z Eus. H. E. III. 39.

A. D.
70.

evidence to the same point from Polycrates bishop of Ephesus, who lived at the end of the second century; and he tells us, that two unmarried daughters of this apostle, who lived to a great age, were also buried at Hierapolis^a. The existence of these daughters is attested by Papias, who speaks of having conversed with them; and by Clement of Alexandria^b, who may be called a contemporary of Polycrates: but when he speaks of Philip having had other daughters who were married, we may perhaps correct his statement by the more detailed account of Polycrates, who says that there was one married daughter, who was buried in his own city of Ephesus. It was perhaps in consequence of the mention of these daughters, that Philip the apostle has been confounded with Philip the deacon, who is said by St. Luke to have resided at Cæsarea with his four daughters who were virgins^c: but it is not difficult to distinguish between them: both appear to have been married and to have had daughters; but the number of their children is different; and while Philip the deacon had his ordinary residence at Cæsarea in Palestine, his namesake the apostle at least ended his days at Hierapolis in Phrygia. We may therefore assume, that this part of Asia Minor was the scene of Philip's preaching; and there is reason to think that he lived till a late period in the first century^d. The tradition of his having travelled into

^a Eus. *H. E.* III. 31. V. 24.

^b Strom. III. p. 535. I omit the testimony of Proculus, who lived in the third century, because by speaking of "four daughters who prophesied," he seems to have confounded the

apostle with the deacon. (Eus. *H. E.* III. 31.)

^c Acts xxi. 8, 9.

^d Polycrates (apud Eus. V. 24.) quotes the apostles John and Philip as his authorities for the time of observing Easter.

Gaul, and even into Britain, has perhaps already obtained from me more notice than it seems to deserve. A. D.
70.

If we omit for the present the remaining history of St. John, our knowledge of the other apostles, James the son of Alphæus, Simon^e, Jude, and Matthias, is reduced almost to nothing. I have already expressed my opinion, that James the son of Alphæus was a different person from James the brother of our Lord, who was the first bishop of Jerusalem; and we know nothing certain concerning his history^f. But when Jude is described as *the brother of James*^g, I conceive that the bishop of Jerusalem is intended; and we may therefore assume, that Jude the apostle was one of the brothers, or rather the cousins, of our Lord. We know further on the authority of Hegesippus, who wrote at the latter end of the second century, that Jude was married and left descendants^h, some of whom we shall speak of again, when we come to the persecution in the time of Domitian. It is therefore most probable, that Jude was one of the persons alluded to by St. Paul, when he asserted his right to lead about a wife, *as well as other apostles, and*

Irenæus says (apud Eus. V. 24.) that Polycarp, who followed the same custom, was guided by John and *the other apostles with whom he had conversed*. If we compare these two passages together, it is not improbable, that Polycarp, who was bishop of Smyrna, may have conversed with Philip at Hierapolis: and if Polycarp was not converted till the year 81, the apostle Philip must at least have lived till that time.

^e Simon is said to have preached in Egypt, Cyrene, and Mauritania, by the Pseudo-Dorotheus and Nicephorus Callist. II. 40. The tradition is rejected by Baronius, ad an. XLIV. 38. and by Schelstrate, *Eccles. Afric. Diss. I. c. 1.*

^f See Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. I. p. 1125.

^g Luke vi. 16. Acts i. 13. Jude 1.

^h Apud Eus. *H. E.* I. 7. III. 19, 20.

A. D.
70.

*the brethren of our Lord*ⁱ. Jude was therefore engaged in preaching the gospel about the year 52: but St. Paul says nothing of the countries, in which he travelled. His descendants seem to have continued to reside in Judæa. His brother, as we have seen, was bishop of Jerusalem, till the year 62: and upon the death of James, another brother, Symeon, succeeded to that office. All this might perhaps incline us to think, that Jude did not absent himself for a long time from his native country; and this notion is confirmed by his styling himself in his Epistle *the brother of James*, an expression which was most likely to be used in a country where James was known. Some persons have assigned a late date to the Epistle of Jude, and have supposed it not to have been written till after the death of most of the apostles. There is, however, but little evidence of this. Its resemblance to some parts of the second Epistle of Peter can hardly fail to strike every reader; and one of the writers must either have seen the composition of the other, or they must have been together for some time, and become accustomed to each other's style. We learn from the Epistle of St. Jude, what I have already mentioned more than once, that the apostles were in the habit of frequently predicting to their hearers the evils which would befall the church from the Gnostics^k. It is in speaking of these calamitous times, that St. Peter and St. Jude so closely resemble each other; and upon the whole I should be inclined to assign to the two Epistles nearly the same date, and to think that they were written between the martyrdom of James, and the destruction of Jerusalem.

ⁱ 1 Cor. ix. 5.

^k Ver. 17.

In bringing together these brief accounts of some of the apostles, I have noticed only the earliest traditions, and those which are reported by writers of established credit. They present us, after all, with a very faint outline of the history of these extraordinary men: and of Simon the zealot, and Matthias, we cannot collect any authentic anecdote. I have said, that there are reasons for thinking that few of the apostles survived St. Peter and St. Paul: and if we look from the date of their martyrdom to the end of the century, we have a period of at least thirty years, which must have been eventful in the infancy of the church, but which in the pages of ecclesiastical history is little more than a blank. It may seem strange that the first thirty years, which followed the ascension of our Lord, should have occupied us so long; and that an equal space of time at the end of the century is dismissed so rapidly. The fact is to be lamented, but cannot be avoided. We may, however, form some idea of the interest, which the gospel must have excited during this obscure period, if we consider what had been already effected by the preaching of the apostles.

The Christian reader will not need to be reminded, that the predictions of our Saviour are to be received as historical documents; and when he said in his prophecy concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, *The gospel must first be published among all nations*¹, we may be sure that in some sense or other the declaration came to pass. It would be trifling to suppose, that every individual nation was literally to be included: but we should certainly expect, that the gospel had spread widely throughout

A. D.
70.

¹ Mark xiii. 10. Matt. xxiv. 14.

A. D.
70.

the world before the destruction of Jerusalem. It would not be difficult to prove, that such had been the case. When St. Paul wrote to the Romans in the year 52, he applied to the circulation of the gospel those words of the Psalmist, *Their sound hath gone out into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world*^m: and when he was imprisoned at Rome six years later, and wrote to the Colossians, he reminds them *of the truth of the gospel, which is come unto you, as it is in all the world*ⁿ; and again, *which ye have heard, and which has been preached to every creature which is under heaven*^o. We are not to be told, that St. Paul wrote this unadvisedly. Several years were wanting of the time, which our Saviour had fixed for the diffusion of the gospel through the world, and St. Paul tells us, that the work was already done. Neither are we without materials for proving this assertion in detail. At the first of the two periods mentioned above, St. Paul said of himself, that he had *fully preached the gospel of Christ from Jerusalem round about unto Illyricum*^p: and at the latter period he had extended his progress to Rome. This takes in the whole of Palestine, with part of Syria, including the capital: the sea-coast of Asia Minor on the south and west, with great part of the interior, and the islands of Cyprus and Crete; Macedonia in its widest signification, Attica, the Peloponnesus, and Rome. These countries, and certainly the most civilized parts of them, were visited by St. Paul before the year 58: and his life was perhaps lengthened six or eight years after this; during which time we may feel certain, that he made his former travels

^m Rom. x. 18. ⁿ Col. i. 6. ^o Ib. 23. ^p Rom. xv. 19.

still more complete, if he did not also add to them much new country, and penetrate to the west of Europe. Such was the success of one only of the apostles in the space of about twenty years; and we know that several other persons were engaged for the same or a longer period in similar labours, We may feel confident, that Egypt was visited by Mark; and there are good grounds for saying, that Thomas preached in Parthia, i. e. in the countries to the east of the Euphrates; and Andrew in Scythia. It is perhaps unnecessary to say more. *Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature*, were among the last words of our Saviour, while on earth; and there is no need of further evidence to shew, that the command was obeyed. We need not believe, as some ancient writers have asserted, that the world was divided among the apostles by lot; and some of them undoubtedly visited the churches, which others had planted. We also know nothing of their ever having met together to compare their respective travels, or to discuss any questions of religion. It is said, as I have stated, that the surviving apostles assembled at Jerusalem in 62 to elect a successor to James; but the evidence is not such as to command assent.

It is perhaps unnecessary to refute at any length the notion of what is called the Apostles' Creed being formed by each of the apostles contributing a sentence, or at least agreeing upon the whole. The idea is as old as the fourth century^q, and is not therefore

^q See Rufinus *de Symb.* Venant. Fortunat. XI. 1. Hieron. *Epist.* LXI. 9. Fulgent. *cont. Fabian.* fr. 36. p. 652. Leo, *Epist.* XXVII. p. For modern

Dissertations, see Natalis Alexander, *Sæc. I. Diss.* XI. G. Vossius *de 3 Symbolis.* Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. I. p. 978, 1175. Buddeus, *Isagoge ad*

A. D. 70. to be treated as a modern superstition. Still, however, we could not admit the fact upon any principles of criticism or history; though there is positive evidence, that creeds were used in the second century; and though these creeds contain nearly all the clauses, which are now found in the Apostles' Creed^r. It might be proved, that in the time of the apostles some articles of faith were propounded to the converts, before they were baptized. In the nature of things it could not be otherwise. These creeds were perhaps short and simple, because the pride or ingenuity of man had not yet learnt to distort words from their obvious meaning: but if we seek a reason for subsequent creeds being longer and more minute, we shall find it in the successive growth of different heresies. It would not be difficult to shew, that some form or other of the Gnostic philosophy led to the insertion of nearly all the clauses, which gradually composed the Apostles' Creed; and though this alone would refute the notion of the Creed being drawn up so early as by the apostles themselves, it at least shews, that there was a need of many of the clauses at a time which almost coincides with the apostolic age.

It is now time, that we should turn from the personal history of the apostles, to that of the Church: but unfortunately the same want of materials, which we met with in the former, is experienced also in the latter, when we come to the time that most of the apostles were withdrawn. We left the Roman

Theologiam, II. 2, 2. p. 441.

Walchius, *Introd. in lib. symbol.*

I. 2. p. 87.

^r See Bull, *Judicium Ecclesiæ Catholicæ*. Some of the points,

which were insisted upon by the apostles in the instruction of catechumens, may be inferred from 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4. Heb. vi. 1, 2.

church encountering its first persecution, which had perhaps continued at intervals for three or four years, and in which the two great apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul, were martyred. The death of Nero, which happened in the June of 68, probably put an end to these cruelties, if they had not terminated before: and while his three successors won and lost the empire in the space of eighteen months, the minds of all parties must have been too much engaged to attend to the Christians. Eusebius assures us, that they were not persecuted during the reign of Vespasian^s; and his words may also be extended through the short reign of Titus; which carries us down to the year 81. Baronius is inclined to suppose, that some Christians were put to death during the time of Vespasian: and the fact is not improbable, though perhaps he trusts to uncertain authorities in recording the names of these early martyrs^t. We have the authority of Suetonius for saying, that no case occurred of an innocent person being punished under this emperor, except when he was absent and uninformed of it, or at least when he was deceived into giving his consent^u. These expressions do not preclude the notion of some Christians being put to death, though Vespasian himself is acquitted: but Dio distinctly frees the reign of Titus from this reproach, when he says, that not only did he never order the execution of a senator, but no other person suffered death during his reign; and as to the charge of irreligion, he never passed sentence in such cases himself, nor suffered them to be heard by others^x. It is well known, that the charge of irre-

A. D.
70.

A. D.
70—81.

^s H. E. III. 17.

^t Ad an. 80. n. 2, 3.

^u Vespas. 15.

^x In Tito, 19. p. 1092.

A. D. 70—81. ligion, *crimen impietatis*, was commonly alleged against the Christians in those days: and the historian perhaps had these unhappy persons in his view, when he said that such causes were not heard during the reign of Titus.

It would be interesting to know, how far this emperor and his father were influenced in their conduct toward the Christians, by what they had seen or heard of them during their campaigns in Judæa. The story of the miracles performed by Vespasian at Alexandria, a year or two before the taking of Jerusalem, is well known to the readers of Tacitus^y: and it is almost impossible not to think, that the emperor or his followers had heard of the miracles of Jesus, and wished to imitate them. We are informed by the same writer^z, that the Jews were at this time impressed with the notion, that a person was soon to arise in Judæa, who would have the government of the world; and it was not the heathen author only, who pronounced this expectation to be fulfilled, when Vespasian was saluted as emperor for the first time in Judæa. Josephus had the servility, not to say the impiety, to make the same reference to Vespasian, though at the same time he professes himself aware, that this expectation was founded on a prophecy in the scriptures^a. These instances of flattery are a proof, that Vespasian himself had heard of such a prediction: and Eusebius has preserved the curious fact, that when Jerusalem was taken, the emperor ordered an inquiry to be made after all the descendants of David, that the Jews might not have any person of the royal race

^y Hist. IV. 81.

ninus, *Vespas.* 4.

^z Ib. V. 13. See also Sueton-

^a De Bel. Jud. VI. 5, 4.

remaining^b. There can be little doubt, that this measure resulted from the jealousy or the fears of A. D.
70—81. Vespasian, who did not find all the Jews so flattering as Josephus, in applying their national prediction to himself: but when Eusebius adds, that a very great persecution of the Jews was the consequence of this inquiry, we are not perhaps to suppose, that these numerous sufferers were all descendants of David; but that many of the Jews were punished for looking to the line of David, rather than to Vespasian, for a fulfilment of the prophecy. We know, that a few years later the descendants of Jude the apostle were exposed to a similar molestation, as being of the race of David. Jude himself may have been alive at the taking of Jerusalem, but was perhaps travelling in a distant country, and so escaped the search which was made by Vespasian. His brother Symeon, however, was bishop of Jerusalem, and continued so for many years after; so that if the fact preserved by Eusebius is true, Symeon contrived to elude the inquisitors, though perhaps he was put to some inconvenience: and unless the flight of the Christians to Pella placed them out of the notice of the emperor, they were not likely to escape, when inquiry was made after all persons, who expected a deliverer of the line of David. This might lead us to think, that Vespasian and his son could not fail to have made some inquiries into the history of Jesus Christ: and Eusebius might seem to contradict his former statement, that the Christians did not suffer during the reign of Vespasian. In this instance, however, they only suffered in common with the Jews: and Eusebius was perhaps

^b II. E. III. 12.

A. D. 70—83. looking more to the Christians in Rome, who were immediately under the eye of the emperor. We may therefore assume, that during the reigns of Vespasian and Titus, i. e. from the year 70 to 81, the Roman church enjoyed comparative rest : and during this period, if the chronology of Pearson is correct, it was under the guidance of Clement, who had been the fellow-labourer of St. Paul. That Clement was the third bishop of Rome, appears to be supported by as strong traditional evidence, as any fact in ecclesiastical history : but the date of his accession, and consequently of his death, has given rise to much discussion. Pearson supposed, that Anencletus died in 69, when he was succeeded by Clement, who held the bishopric till 83. Others, however, place the accession of Clement as late as 93, and his death in 102 : and where the difference of opinion is so wide, I would do little more than mention the two extremes, except to observe, that a person, who was named by St. Paul as his fellow-labourer in the year 58, must have died at a very advanced age, if he continued bishop of Rome till the year 102.

Whatever may be decided concerning this point, the history of Clement belongs to the first century of the church : and he deserves particular mention, as being the author of the only Christian writing now extant, which was composed in the first century, beside the books of the New Testament. Works have come down to us, which bear the names of the apostle Barnabas, and of Hermas, who is perhaps intended to be the person mentioned by St. Paul in his Epistle to the Romans^c. If these writings were genuine, they might perhaps be older

^c xvi. 14.

than the Epistle of Clement, and on that account alone would be entitled to respect. I cannot how-
 ever hesitate to say, that the one is not the work of the apostle Barnabas, and that neither of them can be assigned to the apostolic age. It can be proved, that they were in existence in the second century, and as such they are curious and interesting documents: but this excludes them from our present consideration; and their subject-matter is not such as to invite much inquiry into their age or their authors. The Epistle of Clement is however undoubtedly a genuine work: and though it is greatly to be wished, that more copies should be discovered, our own country is to be congratulated, that it possesses the only copy now known to be in existence^d. The uncertainty of the time of Clement's accession must necessarily affect the date of his Epistle. It seems to speak of some afflictions, which had lately been troubling the Roman church, but which were now past: and this would lead us to fix it soon after the reign of Nero, or several years later, when Domitian's persecution had ceased. There may, however, have been other though slighter persecutions than these, which history has not recorded, and to which Clement may allude. Though the date of the Epistle, and of the facts connected with it, must thus continue uncertain, it acquaints us with an interesting event in another church, which was one of the most considerable of those planted by St. Paul. It appears, that the church of

A. D.
 70—83.

^d It was sent by Cyril, patriarch of Alexandria, and afterwards of Constantinople, to Charles the First. It is at the end of what is called the Alexandrian MS. of the Old and New Testament, and is now in the British Museum.

A. D. 70—83. Corinth had been suffering to a great extent by internal dissensions; and this letter was written in the name of the Roman church to exhort the Corinthians to peace. Eusebius informs us, that Hegesippus, who wrote in the second century, mentioned these dissensions in his ecclesiastical history^e; but no particulars are known concerning them. It is pleasing to meet with this truly charitable intercourse between two distant churches; and it is to be hoped, that the exhortation produced the desired effect. We know, that about a century later the Christians of Corinth were in the habit of reading this Epistle in their churches on Sunday^f; which might at least lead us to think, that it was well received. It was written, as I have stated, in the name of the Roman church, though the name of Clement has always been affixed to it, and it was probably his composition. In ancient times it was treated with a veneration, which was only inferior to that, which was paid to the canonical scriptures. Not only the church of Corinth, where the original copy was probably preserved, but according to Eusebius, both in his own day and a long time before, very many churches were accustomed to have it publicly read^g. We do not know what distinction was made between the reading of such works as this, and the canonical scriptures; but we can only account for the Epistle of Clement not forming part of the New Testament, from the extraordinary care which was taken in the earliest times to arrange the canon. It was most probably composed before some of the writings of St. John, and by a man,

^e H. E. III. 16. ^f Eus. H. E. IV. 23. ^g Ib. III. 16.

who unquestionably had received spiritual gifts from the apostles : it might almost be called the work of an inspired author : all which may explain, why the early Christians treated it with such respect ; and yet it shews, that something was wanting to put it on a level with the canonical scriptures.

Eusebius informs us, that another Epistle was extant in his day, which was said to be the work of Clement, but it was not universally acknowledged, like the former^h. A small fragment of a second Epistle has come down to us ; but the genuineness of it is generally given up by the learned. Epiphanius also speaks of some Epistles of Clement, which were read in the churches, but had been corrupted by the hereticsⁱ : and these are perhaps the only writings, which antiquity allows us, with any show of probability, to ascribe to Clement. The Recognitions and Homilies, which bear his name ; and the Constitutions and Canons of the Apostles, which have sometimes been ascribed to him, are such palpable forgeries, if they were really meant to deceive, that it would be a waste of critical labour to prove that they were not written by Clement. They are not without their use, as speaking the sentiments of the times, in which they were really composed : but they have no connexion with the ecclesiastical history of the first century, except as preserving a few traditions, which may perhaps have been founded upon truth.

Nothing certain is known of the history of Clement, subsequent to his writing his Epistle. Those, who adopt the longer system of chronology, suppose him to have lived through the persecution of Domi-

^h Eus. *H. E.* III. 38.

ⁱ Hær. XXX. 15. p. 139.

A. D. 70—83. tian, and to have died in the year 102, which was the fifth year of Trajan: and Baronius has received as authentic the story of his having been banished by the latter emperor to the Tauric Chersonesus, and afterwards drowned by his orders. There is, however, no authentic evidence of Clement having suffered martyrdom; and there is much more reason to suppose, that he died peaceably^k. His successor in the bishopric of Rome was Evaristus.

A. D. 66—100. In whatever year we place the death of Clement, he witnessed an event, which must have been watched by Christians with peculiar interest, the final destruction of Jerusalem. I have already stated it not to be my intention, as indeed my subject does not require me, to describe the horrors of that protracted catastrophe. I have mentioned the secession of the Christians to Pella, which perhaps took place about the year 66: but though this town has been particularly named, it is impossible to conceive, that it contained all the Christians, who were before living in Jerusalem. It is probable, that Symeon, who was their bishop, and the leading members of the church, found an asylum in Pella: but many other towns in Batanæa and Decapolis, and the whole trans-Jordanic district, may have received some of the fugitives. The providential escape of these men, while the rest of their countrymen were dying by thousands, must have produced a great impression upon the inhabitants of those towns; and if we had any historical details of this interesting period, we should perhaps read of Christianity having made great progress in the country about

^k See Rondinini, *de S. Clemente*, Romæ, 1706.

Pella. The secession of the Christians continued at least till the destruction of Jerusalem in the year A. D. 66—100. 72: some time after which (so great is the attachment of all men to their native country and their accustomed residence,) they returned in considerable numbers, and took possession of the ruins, which Titus had left to mark the greatness of his conquest. There can be no doubt, that Symeon accompanied those of his flock, who returned to Jerusalem: and the church of Jewish Christians once more was seen to flourish in the place, which had been the first to receive, and the first to persecute the gospel.

There is, however, reason to fear, that this sojourn of the Christians in Pella, and the neighbouring towns, was productive of a consequence, which for some centuries inflicted evil upon the church. Epiphanius is very minute in asserting, that the Nazarenes and Ebionites took their rise soon after the destruction of Jerusalem; and that the founders of these sects were to be traced to the Christians, who fled to the neighbourhood of Pella. It might be wished, that a chronological fact of this importance had come down to us upon better authority than that of Epiphanius¹: but in this instance he is so precise in his details, and he was so evidently following some written authority, that I should be inclined on the whole to receive his testimony as true. I am aware, that many writers have placed the Ebionites in the second century: and the whole of

¹ Theodoret quotes Eusebius as saying that the Nazarenes began in the reign of Domitian. Hær. Fab. II. 2. p. 219. They are, however, not mentioned in the History of Eusebius; and he places the Ebionites in the reign of Trajan, III. 27.

A. D. 66—100. this subject has been so perplexed by the different views which have been taken of the tenets of the Nazarenes, that it is hopeless to attempt to bring so many disputes to a decision. I cannot, however, help concluding, that Epiphanius has preserved the true account: and assuming, on his authority, that the Nazarenes and Ebionites appeared at the end of the first century, I shall endeavour to give some description of these two sects.

There can be no doubt, that the Ebionites were looked upon as heretics by all the Fathers: and it is also plain, that they spoke of them as a branch of the Gnostics: a remark, which is of essential use in investigating this branch of ecclesiastical history. Epiphanius also considered the Nazarenes as heretics, and as resembling the Ebionites in some points, though at first their tenets were much less objectionable: and this perhaps is a correct state of the case, as far as concerns the origin of these sects. We know, that *the Nazarene* was a name given in contempt to our Saviour; and that his followers were called *Nazarenes* in reproach long after they had been known among themselves by the name of Christians^m. It by no means follows, if human nature has been the same in all ages, that the party, to whom the epithet was applied, looked upon it as a reproach: but still it is much more likely, that the Christians of Judæa, than those of Greece or Italy, should have been known by a title, which was taken from a Jewish town. We have also seen in the course of these Lectures, (and the Acts of the Apostles are alone sufficient to prove itⁿ,) that many thousands of the Jewish Christians continued for

^m Acts xxiv. 5.

ⁿ See xxi. 20.

several years to retain their attachment to the Law of Moses. It is plain, that some entirely mistook the nature of the Christian covenant; and not only fell under the heavy censure of St. Paul, but unless they were persuaded by his arguments, shut themselves out from those benefits, which they thought to enjoy in conjunction with their privileges as Jews. Others, however, though they retained the Mosaic ceremonies, looked upon them merely as ceremonies, and never thought of obtaining justification except through faith in Christ. Perhaps very few of the descendants of Abraham went further than this. St. Paul undoubtedly saw no harm in professing occasionally the habits of a Jew. The same expediency would lead the other apostles to adopt a similar compliance: and if we may argue from what took place in Jerusalem, when St. Paul arrived there in 53, neither James nor the elders of his church had ceased to conform in some points to the ceremonies of the Law. Such was the state of the Jewish Christians, when they fled to Pella before the destruction of Jerusalem: and thus far we have implicitly followed history: but it is not unnatural to conjecture, that the final subversion of the city, and the dispersion of the Jews as a people, may have produced a decided effect upon these Judaizing Christians. They had been unable to forget, that the Father of their Redeemer had been known for ages as exclusively the God of Abraham; and they had not been taught to tear themselves from the harmless though peculiar customs, which had come to them from their ancestors. But the visions of the past or the future, in which these men might sometimes indulge, were dispelled, and apparently

A. D.
66—100.

A. D. 66—100. for ever, when Jerusalem was levelled with the dust, and their existence as a nation had ceased. It is true, that the Jews from that time to the present have cherished a firm belief, that they shall at length be restored to their country: and their bitter antipathy to the Christians has perhaps strengthened this expectation: but to those, who witnessed the catastrophe, and had already admitted the great truth, that Jews and Gentiles were equal in the sight of God, the destruction of the Jewish polity was perhaps taken as a sign, that Judaism was now to cease. We might expect, that from this time the Judaizing Christians rapidly decreased: and the account preserved by Epiphanius becomes highly probable, that this was the period when the sect or heresy of the Nazarenes began to appear. The Jewish Christians, who had now shaken off the yoke of the ceremonial law, would be apt to speak slightly of those, who still adhered to it. With the usual zeal of persons who have changed their sentiments, they may have refused the name of *Christians* to those who still united the Gospel with the Law: and if the term *Nazarene* was applied by the more numerous party as a reproach, it would be sure to be received by the minority as a title of distinction. There is reason to think, that at first there was no other peculiarity in the tenets of the Nazarenes, except that they adhered to the Mosaic Law. Epiphanius, who lived in the fourth century, is the earliest writer that speaks of the Nazarenes as heretics: and it is plain from his account, that they were not many in number. They appear to have been confined principally to the country, where they first appeared: and if in course of time they became

heretical, it was perhaps from the principle which leads a persecuted party to carry their sentiments further than they originally intended. They have been described as holding a low opinion concerning the divinity of Christ: and if the charge be true, we may perhaps trace it in part to the Ebionites having arisen about the same time and in the same country. A. D.
66—100.

The appearance of the Ebionites is another interesting fact, which probably ought to fill up a blank in the last thirty years of the first century. Epiphanius, as I have stated, places their rise in the country near to Pella, which was occupied by the Christians from Jerusalem. It has been disputed whether there ever was a person called Ebion, from whom they received their name: but it is agreed on all hands, that Ebion was a Jewish word, which signified *poor*. It is impossible not to connect the Ebionites in many respects with the Jews: but at the same time they held opinions, from which an orthodox Jew would have started with horror. It is sufficient to mention, that they treated the writings of the prophets with contempt, and denied their inspiration. So also, while we find that the name of Jesus held a conspicuous place in their creed, we find them also believing him to be born of human parents, and maintaining that Christ was an emanation from God, which descended upon Jesus at his baptism. All these peculiarities are explained, when it is stated that the Ebionites were a branch of the Gnostics.

It was in this obscure period of the first century, that Gnosticism, which had begun with Simon Magus, was making a rapid progress, and was coming

A. D. closer into contact with the believers in the gospel.
66—100. I mean, as I have already stated, that Simon Magus was the first Gnostic, who introduced the name of Christ into his philosophical system. His immediate successor was Menander, who like himself was a native of Samaria, and must have spread his doctrines in the latter part of the first century. These men, and the persons who followed them, maintained the irrational notion, that the body of Jesus was a phantom; that he was not really born; and consequently, that he was not nailed to the cross or died. Strange as it may appear, this belief spread very widely in the second century, and many Christians were persuaded to embrace it. But according to another and perhaps less absurd form of Gnosticism, Jesus had a real body, inasmuch as he was born of human parents; and Christ, who was an emanation from God, was united to Jesus at his baptism. The professors of the former opinion were called Docetæ; and the earliest Gnostics appear to have been of that description. It is not easy to say when the theory of the Docetæ concerning Jesus was succeeded by the other, which I have mentioned: but it is most probable, that the publication of the three first Gospels was instrumental in producing the change; and that the Gnostics, who visited Judæa, could not resist the evidence of Jesus having had a real and substantial human body. The first persons, who are mentioned as maintaining this form of Gnosticism, were Carpocrates and Cerinthus: and though many critics have assigned them to the second century, there is perhaps more probability in placing them at the end of the first. Carpocrates was a Greek, and apparently a student in the Alexandrian

school of Platonism: Cerinthus was a Jew, or at least had adopted in great measure the peculiar rites of Judaism: and this perhaps, rather than any striking difference in their doctrines, was the cause of their being named as the heads of parties. Both of them are represented as grossly immoral in their principles and practice: and Cerinthus displayed the same love of sensuality in his doctrine of a millennium. There is reason to think, that Cerinthus was one of the first Gnostics, who succeeded in inducing the Christians to forsake their faith: and we shall see presently, that there is evidence of his having been the cause of St. John publishing some of his writings. A.D.
66-100.

It may have been the success of Carpocrates and Cerinthus, which led some persons in the neighbourhood of Pella to embrace the heresy described above, as that of the Ebionites. The fugitives from Jerusalem, as I have already observed, could not fail to give a wider circulation to the gospel in that country: and while some became true disciples of Jesus, others, as is the case in the spreading of new opinions, may have imperfectly learnt, or ignorantly perverted, the real doctrines of Christianity. It will be remembered also, that the native inhabitants of this country were not properly Jews; though the vicinity of that peculiar people could not fail to have imparted to them some Jewish notions and customs. The Ebionites, as they are represented by the earliest writers, exactly answer to this compound of imperfect Christianity and imperfect Judaism. If they followed Cerinthus, it was merely in believing Jesus to have been born of human parents, and to have been united to Christ who descended upon him

A. D. 66–100. at his baptism : but their philosophical opinions, if the term can be applied to them, were less irrational, and more consistent with the Jewish scriptures : and with respect to practice, the first Ebionites seem rather to have erred on the side of austerity than of indulgence. It should not be omitted, that ecclesiastical writers have mentioned two divisions of the Ebionites : one which believed Jesus to have been born of human parents ; the other which admitted his miraculous conception. The latter have been identified by some writers with the Nazarenes : but if, as is stated of the Ebionites, they paid no regard to the Jewish prophets ; and if they believed Jesus and Christ to be two separate persons, it is evidently impossible to say, that they agreed with the Nazarenes. If conjecture may be indulged concerning their origin, they seem to have been an offset from that strange mixture of opinions, which were now inundating the world under the name of Gnosticism. While the philosophers of this school were penetrating, as they thought, the depths of physics and metaphysics, it was natural that the poorer classes should not escape the contagion. It is among persons of this rank, that a system of austerity generally finds proselytes : and Ebionite, as I have stated, signified *poor*. In later times the orthodox Christians reproached them for their name, as implying the poverty of their doctrines concerning Christ's divinity : but I should rather infer, that their name originally was descriptive of their rank ; and that if it had not been for the baneful influence of Gnosticism, they would probably have been found among the strictest professors of the gospel. The departure of the Christians from Pella, when they

went to reinstate themselves in the ruins of Jerusalem, would be the cause of many imperfect converts being left behind; and the field was perhaps more open for the Gnostics, when the bishop and the leading members of his church were no longer on the spot to check their efforts. All this may confirm the tradition preserved by Epiphanius, that the Nazarenes and Ebionites appeared in the neighbourhood of Pella soon after the destruction of Jerusalem: and what has been said of the doctrines of the Gnostics, may prepare us for what will be considered in the remaining Lecture, the history of the last years of the apostle St. John^o.

^o For the subject of the Ebionites, Nazarenes, Cerinthians, and Carpocrates, I may refer to my Bampton Lectures, notes 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84.

LECTURE XII.

A. D.
81—96.

THE church, as I have stated, appears to have suffered no systematic persecution during the reigns of Vespasian and Titus : and if we may judge from the regular succession of bishops in different cities, the affairs of the Christians were now considerably organized, and an uniform system of church government was already adopted. The four cities, which afterwards became the principal episcopal sees, have preserved the names of their bishops ; and the persons, who held this office during the first century, are not reported to have met with much molestation. If these bishoprics were mentioned in the order of their foundation, Jerusalem and Antioch would be named first ; and Alexandria might perhaps contest precedence with Rome, if the point was to be settled by the date of their being visited by an apostle.

Concerning the bishops of Rome in the first century I have already spoken, when treating of Clement ; and I observed, that according to different chronologists, he either filled this see to the end of the century, or died in the year 83. His two immediate successors were Evarestus and Alexander.

I have also spoken of Symeon, who was chosen bishop of Jerusalem upon the martyrdom of James in 62 ; and he met his own death at such an ad-

vanced age, that the history of that event belongs to the following century. A. D.
81—96.

The see of Antioch, which, as we have seen, had been intrusted in the first instance to Evodius, is supposed to have become vacant about the year 70. There are traditions, which represent Evodius to have been martyred; and Josephus speaks of a disturbance in Antioch about that period, which was the cause of many Jews being put to death^a. Baronius supposes, that Evodius may have been of this number: but history tells us nothing of any persecution at Antioch about this time, which was directed specially against the Christians. There seems, however, to be but one opinion, that the successor of Evodius was the celebrated Ignatius: and his history, like that of Symeon, belongs rather to the next than to the present century. Since we know so little of the early years of his ministry, the date of his accession would not be of much importance, if some ancient writers had not stated that he was appointed by the apostles, and even by St. Peter or St. Paul^b. That Ignatius may have been personally acquainted with some of the apostles, is not only probable, but the fact can hardly have been otherwise: but there is a difficulty in supposing any of them, and particularly St. Peter, to have appointed him bishop of Antioch, if he did not succeed Evodius till the year 68 or 70. If we suppose him to have been appointed by St. Peter, we can hardly help placing his accession a few years earlier: or perhaps the tradition should refer to St. John, who

^a De Bel. Jud. VII. 3, 3.

XLII. Theodoret. *Dial.* I.

^b See Origen. *in Luc. Hom.* Const. Apost. VII. 46. et not. VI. p. 938. Chrysost. *Orat.* Cotelier. *ad l.*

A. D. 81—96. certainly lived several years later, and who may be supposed to have exercised still greater influence, when he was almost the only surviving apostle. It is however possible, that later writers may have confounded the appointment of Ignatius to the bishopric with his first ordination to the ministry: and it is highly probable, that some one of the apostles, perhaps St. Peter or St. Paul, may in the first instance have laid his hands upon Ignatius: and we cannot wonder, that ecclesiastical tradition should have preserved the names of the persons, who received this distinction, since it is certain that imposition of hands by an apostle conveyed much more than the ordinary operation of the Holy Spirit, and imparted different degrees of preternatural power. We may therefore assume, that Ignatius was one of the persons, who carried on this power into the second century: and the remark, which has been made concerning his apostolical ordination, may perhaps be applied to other persons, who are said to have received their bishoprics from one of the apostles.

I have stated, that Annianus was placed over the church of Alexandria about the year 62: and if history has correctly assigned twenty-two years to his holding that office, we may perhaps suppose, that the progress of the gospel was not much checked during that period: and we shall see hereafter that in some points of view the church of Alexandria became more flourishing than any other. Abilius, who succeeded Annianus, survived the reign of Domitian, which in other places is known to have been hostile to the Christians; and Cerdo was made bishop of Alexandria about the year 97.

It would neither be desirable nor practicable to

pursue these details in many other churches: and it is only the celebrity of the four great sees, Jerusalem, Antioch, Rome, and Alexandria, which has preserved the succession of their bishops, and induced me to trace them to the close of the first century. It is probable, that the limits of even these bishoprics did not extend at present much beyond their respective towns. The word, which was used for some centuries to express a bishopric, is that from which the term *parish* is derived; and the *πάρικοι*, or inhabitants of each town or city, if they were sufficiently numerous, had their own bishop or head^c. The head of the Roman church had perhaps no jurisdiction beyond the walls of the capital at the time which we are now considering. The limits of the Alexandrian church are still more uncertain. The bishop of Jerusalem had perhaps authority over the different churches of Judæa, not only from the superior sanctity of the mother city, but because he succeeded to the apostles, who had been in the habit of visiting the whole of Judæa and Galilee. Antioch, as the capital of Syria, was also likely to give more extensive authority to the bishop of that see. It was evidently the system of St. Paul, as I have frequently shewn, to place every congregation under its own spiritual ruler. So long as he lived, he never considered himself to be freed from providing for the churches which he had planted: but this did not hinder him, if it did not require him, to appoint some one person to manage each particular church. Where the place was of importance, like Ephesus, the church would naturally be independent, and subject only to himself, or the

A. D.
81—96.

^c Bingham IX. 2, 1.

A. D. 81—96. deputy whom he appointed. In other places, as in Crete, the nature of the country would point out the expediency of one person being left, like Titus, to manage the different churches. Thus the *diocese* of a bishop, if we use the modern expression, or his *parish*, if we adopt the more ancient, was sometimes extended over a district, but was more generally confined to a single town. We have the evidence of St. John, that the churches of Asia Minor had each their respective bishop at the end of the first century: and though the point is not certain, it is possible, that Ephesus was a kind of metropolis of the seven churches which he mentions. Of these there are only two, Ephesus and Laodicea, which are known to have existed before the death of St. Paul. The time of the gospel being first established in Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardes, and Philadelphia, is not recorded. St. Paul may easily have visited them: but thus much is certain, that before the end of the first century, the Christians were numerous in all of them. The name of Polycarp, who about this time was bishop of Smyrna, will become better known to us in the history of the second century; and there is the best authority for saying, that he received his appointment, or at least his ordination, from some one or more of the apostles.

The prosperity of the churches in Asia Minor need not surprise us, if we could be certain, that the Christians at Ephesus were all this time superintended by Timothy. The favourite disciple and fellow-labourer of St. Paul would not forget the injunction which he had received, to keep the flock committed to his trust: and though we have no authentic account of him subsequent to the martyr-

dom of St. Paul, tradition speaks confidently of his having been bishop of Ephesus, and continued in that office till nearly the end of the century. There are also strong grounds for believing, that the latter days of St. John were spent in the neighbourhood of Ephesus. His death appears to have nearly coincided with the end of the first century, and he was probably for some years the last surviving apostle. Later writers would represent him as bishop of Ephesus: but it is perhaps more correct to state, that none of the apostles could properly be called bishops of any particular see. The care of many churches devolved upon them, as was the case with St. Paul: and if St. John resided principally at Ephesus, the neighbouring cities had perhaps the advantage of his spiritual counsel and assistance. The time of St. John's arrival in that country is very uncertain. We know nothing of him from the New Testament subsequent to the year 46, when he attended the council at Jerusalem: but it might be conjectured, that he had not visited Ephesus, or certainly had not taken up his abode there, at the time of St. Paul leaving it in 52. Epiphanius describes him as advanced in years, when he settled in Asia Minor^b: and this appears on the whole to be most probable. The accounts, which represent the Virgin Mary as attending him to Ephesus, are of a late date: and it is difficult to say, whether the notion had any other foundation, than the fact of Jesus having committed his mother to the care of his favourite disciple. There certainly was a tradition in the fifth century, that the Virgin Mary died at

A. D.
81—96.

^b Hær. LI. 2. p. 423.

A. D. 81—96. Ephesus^e: but again we are completely at a loss as to the date of this event: and the age of the Virgin would make it more probable, that she died before the time of St. John visiting Ephesus.

We know little or nothing of the countries, in which he preached the gospel: though it cannot be doubted, that like the other apostles, he was actively engaged; and St. Paul must have had good reasons for coupling him with Peter and James, as *pillars* of the church^f. Augustin and some other writers have quoted the first Epistle of St. John, as addressed to the Parthians^g; and hence it has been supposed, that he preached to that people: but the evidence is hardly sufficient to persuade us of the fact; and we find ourselves late in the reign of Domitian, before we know any thing certain concerning him; and at that time we see him connected with the churches of Asia Minor.

Though the New Testament is silent as to the cause, as well as the time, of his settling in that country, we are perhaps not without materials for understanding why his presence there was peculiarly necessary. I have often had occasion to allude to the Gnostic doctrines: and I have also observed, that the last thirty years of the first century form a period, of which we know very little. It is more than^h probable, that Gnosticism spread rapidly during these thirty years; and toward the close of them, it seems to have caused many Christians to fall from the truth. The apostles foresaw this evil, and frequently warned their converts, that it was about to

^e Act. Concil. Ephes. ed. Labb. vol. III. p. 574.
^f Gal. ii. 9.

^g Augustin. Quæst. Evang. II. 19. Cassiodorus, vol. V. p. 111.

come. St. Paul^h, St. Peterⁱ, St. James^k, and St. Jude^l, all allude to a great falling away, or a sad depravation of morals, in what they call *the latter times*: and though this expression is obscure, and has led to many interpretations, St. John seems to fix the fulfilment of the predictions to his own day, when he says, *Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists: whereby we know that it is the last time*^m. It is plain, that when this passage was written, there was a general expectation of the appearance of antichrist: and St. John leads us to what is perhaps the true interpretation, that antichrist is not any one individual, but all persons, who oppose or corrupt the gospel of Christ. The antichrists alluded to by St. John were most probably the Gnostics; and though they had been propagating their doctrines for a long time, it was perhaps not till late in the first century, that they began to be formidable to the church by seducing its members. I have spoken of Carpocrates and Cerinthus as leaders of the Gnostics in the first century: and ecclesiastical tradition has connected Cerinthus very closely with the personal history of St. Johnⁿ. He seems to have had his residence for

^h 1 Tim. iv. 1. 2 Tim. iii. 1.
See also 2 Thess. ii. 3.

ⁱ 2 Pet. iii. 3.

^k v. 3.

^l 18.

^m 1 John ii. 18. Concerning these passages, I would refer to my Bampton Lectures, note 60.

ⁿ Irenæus quotes Polycarp as having been heard to say, that John being at Ephesus, and

going to bathe, and seeing Cerinthus in the place, hurried out of the bath without bathing, and added, Let us run away, lest even the bath should fall to pieces, while Cerinthus the enemy of truth is in it. III. 3, 4. p. 177. Theodoret. *Hær. Fab.* II. 3. p. 220. Epiphanius puts the name of Ebion for Cerinthus, *Hær.* XXX. 24. p. 148.

A. D. 81—96. some time at Ephesus; and he found the people in that country but too well disposed to embrace his doctrines. He inculcated, as I have stated, the greatest laxity of morals: and as if this universal indulgence had not been sufficiently attractive, it was held by another branch of the Gnostics, that there was no harm in partaking of a sacrifice, which had been offered to an idol. The Gnostics had at first followed the example of the Christians, and had learnt to despise the absurdities and impieties of pagan worship. But we have seen, that in the time of persecution, the Christians were required, as a test of their opinions, to join in the public sacrifices. Their refusal was punished by death; and Simon Magus has been accused of teaching his own disciples, that compliance in this instance was not a sin^o. Whatever may be thought of this accusation, it is certain, that toward the end of the century there were some Gnostics, who did not scruple *to eat things sacrificed unto idols*; and these men were then known by the name of Nicolaitans^p. The origin of the term is uncertain; and though Nicolas the deacon has been mentioned as their founder, the evidence is extremely slight, which would convict that person himself of any immoralities^q.

I should conjecture, that St. John came to Ephesus, not only as the metropolis of Asia Minor, but as the head quarters of Gnosticism; and it is impossible to doubt, that the presence of an apostle was successful for some time in checking the evil. There were, however, enemies of a different kind

^o Origen. cont. Cels. VI. 11.
p. 638. Bampton Lectures,
note 64.

^p Rev. ii. 6, 15.
^q Bampton Lectures, p. 145,
&c.

which he had to encounter ; and while the Christians were exposed to trials from within and from without, the Nicolaitans had an opportunity of practising those principles of compliance, which they found so safe and convenient. A. D.
81—96.

The name of Domitian is handed down, as that of the second persecutor of the Christians after Nero ; and though the greater part of his reign was marked by cruelties, it seems to have been in his latter years, that his attention was turned to the professors of the gospel^r. Eusebius speaks of this persecution forming a kind of sequel to the executions, banishments, and confiscations, which Domitian had practised against numbers of people of rank^s : and the statement may perhaps be taken, not only as marking the time, but as serving in some degree to explain the cause of the persecution. A mind, like that of Nero or Domitian, was not likely, if left to itself, to feel much solicitude about matters of religion. But we have seen that Nero found it convenient to torture the Christians, that his own conduct might not be scrutinized. I have conjectured, that this plan was suggested to him by persons interested in hindering the pagan superstitions from being subverted by Christianity : and it is probable, that Domitian was influenced by arguments of a similar kind. While his jealousies and suspicions were causing Rome to be deluged with patrician blood, it was desirable, that he should take some steps to suppress the public indignation. An exhibition of Christian victims in the amphitheatre would

^r Concerning the date of Domitian's persecution, see Toi-
nard, ad Lact. *De mort. Pers.* c. 3.
^s H. E. III. 17.

A. D. 81—96. at any time appease the populace: and as soon as the emperor allowed this *foreign superstition* to be attacked, he gained the favour of a large and influential body among his subjects. His persecution of the Christians is indicated with sufficient plainness by heathen historians. Suetonius^t speaks of heavy contributions being levied upon the Jews; and those, he adds, who professed that religion, but endeavoured to conceal it, were compelled to pay the tax which was imposed. There can be little doubt, that these persons were Christians. For many years, as I have already observed, they were confounded with the Jews in the opinion of the heathen^u. The mistake was perhaps not unnatural; and after the total subversion of the Jewish nation, it was likely to bring a still greater share of contempt upon the Christians. The plan of taxing them as Jews was sure to be a popular measure: and the persons, who are said to have concealed their religion, were probably Christians, who asserted with truth that they were not Jews, but were not believed by the officers of government. Dio Cassius confirms the remark which has just been made, when he is speaking of Acilius Glabrio, who was put to death in the fifteenth year of Domitian. His crime, according to this historian, was atheism; which, as we have seen, was equally alleged against Jews and Christians; and he states, that Glabrio, together with several other persons, about this time had adopted Jewish manners^x. We have another instance of this kind

^t Domit. 12.

^u See Damann *de Christianis ad Trajanum usque a Cæsaribus et Senatu Romano pro cultoribus*

religionis Mosaicæ semper habitis. Helmst. 1790.

^x LXVII. 14. p. 1112.

in the case of Flavius Clemens who was put to death about the same time. This man was uncle to the emperor, and had been consul in the preceding year; but neither of these distinctions was sufficient to protect him. He and his wife Domitilla were both convicted of atheism: for which, according to the words of Dio, many persons were condemned, who had gone over to Judaism; some of whom suffered death, and some had their property confiscated. Clemens himself was one of the former, and his wife was banished. Suetonius, in giving an account of the same tragedy, has mentioned another charge, which was brought against the Christians. He speaks of Clemens as a man whose indolence made him contemptible^y: and we know from later apologists, that one of the calumnies against the Christians was taken from their little attention to public affairs^z. The charge was perhaps in some respects true: and when a man embraced the gospel, he could hardly help abstaining from many acts, which were connected with the rites and superstitions of paganism. Clemens had probably given offence of this kind during his consulate: and his relationship to the emperor perhaps emboldened him to speak his sentiments plainly. Enemies would not be wanting, who urged Domitian to rid himself of such a troublesome friend; and hence the transition was easy, to represent all the Christians as dangerous to the state. Before this time, the sons of Clemens had been destined by Domitian to succeed him in the empire: and if the tyrant had been sooner cut off, a Christian prince might have been seated upon the throne of the Cæsars at the end of the first cen-

A. D.
81—96.

^y Domit. 15.

^z Tertullian. *Apol.* 42. p. 33.

A. D. 81—96. tury. This, however, was prevented by the whole family of Clemens being involved in his punishment : and Eusebius has preserved a curious anecdote, which shews that jealousy and fear contributed to excite Domitian to these acts of cruelty. He seems to have heard of the notion, which was current among Jews and Christians, of a king who was to come from the line of David : and like Vespasian, he ordered search to be made for any of David's descendants^a. The Christians, as I have stated, had returned to the ruins of Jerusalem : and it is probable, that before the end of Domitian's reign they were settled there in considerable numbers. We have seen, however, that some heresies sprang up at the same time ; and the church of Jerusalem was now beginning to suffer from the errors of the Gnostics. Some of these heretics gave information to the officers of Domitian, that there were some descendants of Jude, the cousin of our Lord, who were sprung from the line of David. The history states, that they were brought into the presence of the emperor, who examined them concerning their condition, and their notions of Christ's kingdom. Their humble circumstances were very apparent : and they satisfied the emperor, that the kingdom of Christ was not of this world. It is added, indeed, that Domitian was so struck by their defence, that he stopped the persecution of the Christians by a public edict^b.

^a Eus. *II. E.* III. 19, 20. It is an ingenious conjecture of Martin, that this was the reason, why Josephus introduced the controverted passage concerning Jesus being the Christ. He wished to remove the fear

of Domitian by asserting that the Christ was already come. Upon this hypothesis the passage would of course be admitted as genuine.

^b The same is said by Tertullian, *Apol.* c. 5.

This, however, requires confirmation: and it seems more probable, that the exiles were not recalled till the following reign of Nerva: or at all events, the death of Domitian followed so shortly after, that the persecution may be said to have lasted to the end of his reign.

A. D.
81—96.

We have no means of judging, whether this search after the descendants of David was accompanied by measures of cruelty against the Christians of Palestine. There is, however, positive evidence, that the example, which was set by the emperor in the capital, was followed in distant parts of the empire. The Christians of Asia Minor were exposed to severe trials. The usual alternative was offered them of sacrificing to an idol, or submitting to torture: and while their heathen enemies threatened them on the one side, the Nicolaitans and different Gnostic sects were tempting them on the other, by teaching them that in such cases compliance was not a sin. This convenient doctrine seduced not a few Christians from their faith: but many still stood firm; and St. John has recorded the name of Antipas, who with several others received the crown of martyrdom at Pergamos^c. St. John was himself a witness, and perhaps a partaker, of these sufferings: but though there is no doubt as to the fact and the scene of his banishment, there are some earlier events in the story, which are not received with the same implicit belief. It is sufficient to state, that he is reported to have been sent to Rome by the proconsul of Asia, where he was thrown into a vessel of boiling oil, and came out unhurt. If local tradition

^c Rev. ii. 13.

A. D. 81—96. might be allowed to have any weight, we might believe, that some such event befell St. John at Rome; and Tertullian, who wrote at the end of the second century, does not appear to have entertained any doubt of the fact^d. The critical, and perhaps I may add, the philosophical Mosheim did not think that the story was to be treated with contempt^e: and perhaps we must rest satisfied with this conclusion; but, as I observed before, there can be no doubt, that St. John was banished to Patmos, an island in the Ægean, and not far from the coast of Asia Minor, *for the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ*^f. Later writers have asserted, that he was condemned to work in the mines^g: a punishment, which we know to have been inflicted upon the Christians: but the great age of St. John at this time would perhaps have exempted him from such labour. There were also traditions, that he converted the inhabitants of the island to Christianity^h: a fact, which in itself is not improbable; but which does not rest on sufficient authority. That St. John was now at a very advanced age, cannot be questioned. Though he is generally considered to have been the youngest of our Saviour's disciples, he must at least have been arrived at manhood, when he was called to follow him: and the testimony of Irenæus seems in this instance indisputable, that St. John saw the Apocalypse at the end of the reign of Domitianⁱ. This emperor died in the year 96; which

^d De Præscript. c. 36. Hieron. in Matt. xx. 23.

^e See his Dissertation upon this subject.

^f Rev. i. 9.

^g Victorinus Pictaviensis in *Apoc.* Primasius *ib.*

^h Metaphrast. in Joan. apud *Œcumenium*.

ⁱ V. 30, 3. p. 330.

must have been almost the number of years that St. John had lived, when he saw the Apocalypse. A. D.
81—96.

Baronius represents his banishment in Patmos as having lasted six years: but there is no evidence of this; and it may rather be inferred, that the persecution, which sent him thither, did not take place till late in the reign of Domitian. The only authentic circumstance, which we know of his residence in the island, is his having the vision or revelation, which he afterwards committed to writing. He does not state, whether he wrote it at the time, or whether he waited till his return from banishment; but perhaps the Revelation itself preceded his release by only a short period. I have mentioned, that some ancient accounts make Domitian himself to have rescinded his edicts of persecution: in which case St. John may have returned from Patmos before that emperor's reign was ended; but it is more generally supposed, that the exiles were not suffered to return till the following reign of Nerva^k. We have the evidence of Dio, that this emperor caused all persons to be acquitted, who were accused of impiety to the gods, and permitted those who were banished to return to their homes. There can be no doubt, that the Christians were included, if not principally intended in this decree: and therefore St. John might have left Patmos at the end of the year 96, if he had not been released before. Here again we are left to vague and uncertain traditions concerning the remaining years of his life. He seems certainly to have returned to Ephesus^l:

^k This is said by Dio Cass. LXVIII. 1. p. 1118. Lactantius, *De mort. Pers.* c. 3.

^l Irenæus, II. 22, 5. p. 148. Clem. Alex. *Quis dives salvetur*, p. 959.

A. D. 96—100. and writers of the second and third centuries speak of his tomb being seen in that city^m; so that we may at least conclude, that the latter years of his life were passed in this part of Asia Minor. We have his own evidence for saying, that he would find the churches of that country in a suffering and afflicted state: but the reign of Nerva afforded them protection from their open enemies; and the aged apostle was himself their best defender against the errors of the Gnostics. The church of Ephesus seems to have had the benefit of his special superintendence: but a writer of the second century speaks of his taking journeys into the neighbouring district, in some cases to appoint bishops, and in others to settle the whole constitution of the churchesⁿ. The great age of St. John might seem to have unfitted him for active duties of this kind: but we can hardly doubt, that his life was prolonged to this unusual period by a special providence, which enabled him, though now so old, still to continue his apostolical labours. Among the bishops appointed by him at this time, we may place Polycarp, who filled the see of Smyrna, if he had not held it before the banishment of St. John: but though the date of his appointment is uncertain, we have the positive testimony of Irenæus^o, that the apostle and Polycarp were personally known to each other.

The writings of St. John form the most interesting part of his history, subsequent to his return from banishment: but there are so many points of minute criticism connected with this subject, that I must

^m Polycrates, *apud Eus. H. E. III. 31. V. 24.* Dionys. Alex. *apud Eus. H. E. VII. 25.* Origen. *apud Eus. H. E. III. 1.* ⁿ Clem. Alex. l. c. ^o Epist. ad Florin.

abstain from giving any thing but what appears the A. D.
 most probable result. The Apocalypse, as I have 96—100.
 stated, may have been committed to writing during
 the residence of the apostle in Patmos, or shortly
 after his return to Ephesus; which would fix its
 date to the year 96 or 97. Concerning the Gospel
 of St. John, some have supposed it to have been
 written before the destruction of Jerusalem: but on
 the whole I cannot help agreeing with those, who
 assign to it a much later date; and perhaps it was
 written, like the Apocalypse, after the return of St.
 John from Patmos^p. Irenæus, as being acquainted
 with Polycarp, was not likely to be mistaken, when
 he says, that it was written at Ephesus^q; and on
 the same authority we are informed of the interest-
 ing fact, that it was designed to root out the erro-
 neous doctrine, which had been spread by Cerinthus,
 and some time before by the Nicolaitans^r. Epipha-
 nius, who did not live till the fourth century, has
 added, that it was written to refute the Ebionites
 in their notion of Christ^s: and perhaps without
 weighing these statements separately, we may say
 in general terms, that St. John published his Gospel
 on account of the deep root, which the Gnostic doc-
 trines were beginning to take in Asia Minor. This
 will not enable us to fix the date of it with precision;
 but it greatly confirms the notion of its having been
 composed toward the end of the century: and the
 fact of St. John applying the term *Logos* to Christ,
 without any explanation, shews that the application
 had already been made; and would lead us to assign

^p This was the opinion of
 Mill, Fabricius, Le Clerc,
 Jones.

^q Irenæus, III. III. p. 174.

^r Ib. II, I. p. 188.

^s Hæc. LXIX. 23. p. 746.

A. D. 96—100. it to a period considerably subsequent to the writings of St. Paul. The Gnostics, as I have already stated, made use of the name of Christ in their fanciful system of philosophy. They made him to be one of the later emanations from the Deity, and to have been sent into the world to repair the evil, which the Demiurgus, or creature Æon, had caused. Thus, though they held him in a certain sense to be the Son of God, and to have been sent by God into the world, they supposed him to have had a beginning, and they had no notion of his atoning for our sins by dying on the cross. I have mentioned, that they either believed Jesus to be a phantom, or to have been born in the ordinary way of human parents; and they maintained, that Christ was the Spirit which descended upon Jesus at his baptism. Thus among their other errors, they considered Jesus and Christ to be two separate beings; and it was against all these errors together, that Irenæus conceived St. John to have directed his Gospel; which remarkably agrees with what we are told by St. John himself, who says, *These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.*

There are other traditions concerning the Gospel of St. John; such as, that the apostle wrote it in confirmation of the other three Gospels, and to supply some points, which they had omitted^t. It is also said, that he was urged to the task by the bishops of Asia Minor, who wished to have an antidote to the poison of Cerinthus and his followers^u.

^t See Clem. Alex. *apud Eus. H. E.* VI. 14. ^u Hieron. in Mat.

There is nothing improbable in any of these statements, and the late date of the Gospel, as well as its reference to the Gnostic heresy, may perhaps be inferred from the use of the term *Logos*, as applied to Jesus Christ. This is known to have been the name of one of the emanations in the Gnostic scheme; and there can be little doubt, that the term was borrowed from the Platonic philosophy. It can be proved from the writings of Philo, that the Alexandrian Jews had taken to ascribe many of the operations of God to his *Logos*, or Mind, or Reason: and though they did not really make the Logos of God a separate being from God, they adopted a mystical phraseology, in which the Logos might sometimes appear to be personified. The Gnostics carried this system still further, and actually made the Logos a distinct emanation from God. When they also adopted Christ into their system, it was an easy process to identify him with the Logos, which they had already personified: and we may infer from the opening of St. John's Gospel, that even the orthodox Christians had taken to use the term *Logos* as an epithet of Jesus Christ. If considered as a mere name, the application was harmless: but as an identity of terms is likely to lead to an identity of doctrine, there was a danger lest the Gnostic notion of the Logos should be substituted for the real notion of Jesus Christ. St. John, therefore, begins with asserting, that the Logos of the Christians had existed from all eternity, was himself God, and was the Creator of the world; all which points were directly opposed to the system of the Gnostics: and since the latest writings of St. Paul contain no trace of the term *Logos* being then applied to

A. D.
96—100.

A. D. Christ, we must allow some years to have elapsed
96—100. before the opening of St. John's Gospel would have
 been intelligible to his readers.

The same difference of opinion, which exists concerning the date of St. John's Gospel, may be met with also concerning his Epistles; and I shall only observe, that the allusions, which they contain to the doctrines of the Docetæ, seem rather to confirm the notion that they were not written till toward the end of the century. A tradition preserved by Irenæus, and which he had heard from Polycarp, represents St. John as having come personally in contact with Cerinthus^x. A writer, who lived about a century after the death of the apostle, had heard of his restoring a person to life at Ephesus^y: and a story is recorded by Jerom, which we might wish to believe from its natural and affecting simplicity, that the venerable apostle was at length so weakened by age, that his disciples were obliged to carry him to the religious meetings of the Christians: and when even his voice failed him, he continued to address them with what might be called his dying words, "My dear children, love one another." These details may be excused concerning the last of the apostles: and it is singular, that the time of his death, which forms the termination of the apostolic age, coincides very nearly with the end of the first century. It is twice stated by Irenæus, that St. John lived to the time of Trajan^z: and we can hardly doubt that in making this assertion he followed the authority of Polycarp. Trajan

^x See note n, p. 363.

^z II. 22, 5. p. 148. III. 3, 4.

^y Apollonius apud Eus. V. p. 178.

began his reign in the year 98: and the words of A. D. Irenæus would rather lead us to infer, that St. John 96—100. did not live long after the beginning of it. The accounts of later writers represent him as dying at the age of one hundred, or a little more.

There is good reason to hope, that the few last years of his life were spent in comparative peace, without molestation from his heathen adversaries. I have already mentioned that an edict of Nerva allowed all exiles to return to their homes: and the writer, who tells us this, expressly adds, that no person was allowed to be charged with irreligion as a crime, or of adopting Judaism^a; and this, as I lately observed, can only be taken as referring to the profession of Christianity. The reign of Nerva lasted from the September of 96 to the January of 98: and though we know nothing of the affairs of the Christians in this short period, we may hope that under the protection of the above-mentioned edict, they escaped persecution, and their numbers continued to increase. It is pleasing to end the ecclesiastical history of the first century with the reign of an emperor like Nerva. We have no reason to think, that personally he felt any inclination to Christianity: but he probably saw the injustice of punishing men for their opinions; and having himself been banished by Domitian, before he was taken into his favour, he perhaps felt less inclined to listen to the advice of those, who would have urged him to imitate the tyrant. His edict would naturally lead to the spreading of the gospel in the capital. Persons of rank, such as the widow of Flavius Clemens, would now have no fear of professing their opinions: and

^a Dio l. c.

A. D. 96—100. among the evils of the late persecution there would be sure to be this benefit, that it purified the faith of those, who still had courage to maintain their sentiments.

If we seek for the time, when the church of Christ existed in its greatest purity, we must perhaps go back to those its earliest days, when *the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul*: but we must add with sorrow or with shame, that these delightful days were few, and have never since returned. Still, however, there is much in the ecclesiastical history of the first century, upon which we can look back with pleasure: and those persons have either not studied, or have wilfully perverted the documents which have come down to us, who represent the faith of these primitive Christians as unsettled, or as differing from our own. I have often spoken of the Gnostic philosophy, as a dangerous enemy to the gospel. In the second century the evil was widely and fatally experienced. I have conjectured also, (and upon the authority of the New Testament itself,) that it was beginning to be felt, before the first century was closed: but I should infer, that it was late in the first century, before this was the case. While the apostles were alive, and particularly St. Paul, they made it their great object to save their converts from this fatal contagion; and their unremitting exertion appears to have kept it off for a considerable time. But even while St. Paul was alive, we can find indications of its ravages in the neighbourhood of Ephesus: and we may suppose, what would be the consequence, when the apostles one by one were removed from their earthly labours. St. John, as I have often

mentioned, was the last who survived; and it is singular, that we find him ending his days in the same place, which had been the longest residence of St. Paul, and guarding his flock from the same evil, which St. Paul had combated thirty years before. I have little doubt, that this will lead us to the true reason, why St. John fixed upon Ephesus as his residence in the latter years of his life. He felt it his duty to fix himself in that spot, where his presence was most needed: and though the Asiatic churches were partly infected by Gnosticism, we may infer that even in that district the progress of the evil was arrested by the timely presence of St. John. With the exception of the Gnostic errors, there is no evidence of any heresy being introduced into the church in the first century. While the apostles were alive, it was perhaps hardly possible: and though the Fathers have led us into the habit of speaking of the Gnostics as *heretics*, we must carefully distinguish between the ancient and modern use of the term heresy. When a Christian adopted the Gnostic notion concerning Christ, he in fact ceased to be a Christian: he perhaps retained the name, but he gave up his hope of a resurrection, and his faith in a Redeemer; and I conceive that St. John had these cases in view, when he said, that already *there were many Antichrists*; and when he added, *They went out from us, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest, that they were not all of us*^b. It is therefore very essential to be remem-

^b 1 John ii. 19.

bered, that ecclesiastical history speaks of no heresy, i. e. of no division of opinion among genuine Christians, in the first century. I am now speaking of matters which concern salvation, or which are held by one party or the other to be necessary for belief. There were doubtless many local customs, and religious ceremonies, which were observed in one country and not in another. The great division of Jewish and Gentile Christians was likely to lead to differences, which nothing perhaps but the presence and authority of the apostles could have kept within bounds. If the Jews had believed, that the Mosaic ceremonies were necessary for salvation, this would have been a heresy in the fullest and worst sense of the term; and whenever such a notion was started, it was met by the apostles with the most decisive opposition. But when the matter was put upon its right footing, and the ceremonies of the Mosaic Law were retained merely as national customs, then there was no rupture of *the bond of peace*; and Jews and Gentiles held communion with each other, though the former adhered to practices, which were looked upon by the latter as wholly unnecessary.

Another pleasing subject of contemplation may be found in the characters of those persons, who were appointed by the apostles to succeed them. The names of many of these apostolical pastors are lost, and of some we know little: but Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, and Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, were suited, as far as was possible, to repair the loss, which the church sustained in the death of the apostles. They form the connecting link between the first and second centuries; between the period, when the church was administered by the inspired

companions of Christ, and when it was left to ordinary human wisdom, with only the remnant of that miraculous aid, which God still thought fit on some occasions to interpose. Both of these venerable martyrs have left writings behind them; but they belong to the history of the second century; and I would again repeat, that beside the writings of the New Testament, the Epistle of Clement is the only genuine production of any Christian writer of the first century.

With the exception of the writings of St. John, the books of the New Testament were perhaps all in circulation twenty or thirty years before the end of the first century. No Epistle of St. Peter or St. Paul could have been written after the year 68; and the Epistle of St. James, who was martyred in 62, must have been composed a few years earlier. The Epistle of St. Jude, as I have already mentioned, may have been written subsequent to the death of St. Peter and St. Paul; but there is no reason for placing it much later. The three first gospels were perhaps all composed before the year 62: and during the last thirty years of the first century, there was abundant time for all these writings to come into general circulation. The quotations, which were made from them by Clement and Ignatius, prove the respect in which they were held: and it is plain, that from the first they were considered to be as much a part of inspired scripture as the books of the Old Testament. Of the writings which I have mentioned, the genuineness of none has been called in question, except the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Epistles of St. James and St. Jude, and the second

Epistle of St. Peter. With respect to these, there can be little doubt as to their antiquity, or their having been ascribed to their respective writers as early as the first century: but they were not in such general circulation as the other writings of the apostles, and some doubts were entertained, in distant churches, as to their respective authors. At length, however, they were received in every church, and their genuineness has been proved by the same tests which are applied to the writings of heathen authors. It has been asserted, that what is called the canon of scripture was settled by St. John: but there is no good evidence of this: and the conjecture probably rests merely on the fact of St. John having survived all the other apostles^b. We have seen, that all the canonical writings of the New Testament, with the exception of those of St. John himself, were in existence at least thirty years before the end of the first century: and reasons have been given for concluding, that not only the Apocalypse, but the Gospel and Epistles of St. John, were composed in the latter part of Domitian's reign. We must recollect, that the difficulties, which now attend the settling of the canon of the New Testament, did not exist in those days. The writings of the apostles were circulated, when the apostles were themselves living; and if a spurious work had been forged in any of their names, the attempt would immediately have been exposed. The canon of the New Testament was therefore settled, not by any formal act of the whole body of believers, but by

^b See Griesbach, *Hist. textus* Semler, *Comm. Hist. de antiq. Epist. Paulin.* sect. 2. §. 12. *Christ. statu*, tom. I. p. 35—39.

the notoriety of the circumstances attending the publication of each book. The history of the second century will bring us acquainted with many spurious works, which were written in the names of some of the apostles. It is possible, that this system of forgery may have begun in the first century; and the charge has been brought expressly against Simon Magus and his followers^c: but the apostolical Fathers, as they are justly termed, have not mentioned by name any such apocryphal publications^d: and though some few may have been in existence before the death of St. John, the consideration of them belongs more properly to the second century, when the rapid progress of Gnosticism gave birth to a numerous family of apocryphal gospels.

I have already observed, that no heresy, (if we use the term in its modern sense,) had arisen in the church before the end of the first century. There was great danger from the specious resemblance, which some of the Gnostic doctrines were made to bear to Christianity: but if a Christian openly professed any of these doctrines, from that time he ceased to be a Christian. The church is truly stated by Hegesippus^e, who wrote his ecclesiastical history in the second century, “to have continued a virgin “till the time of Trajan:” that is, as Hegesippus himself explains it, “it was not yet corrupted by “vain doctrines:” or according to the comment of Eusebius, who has preserved this passage in his own history, “If there were any before that time, who “endeavoured to corrupt the wholesome rule of the

^c Constit. Apost. VI. 16.

^e Apud Eus. *H. E.* IV. 22.

^d See Jones on the Canon, III. 32.
part I. c. 3.

“evangelical preaching, they lurked in darkness and “obscurity.”

But though the Gnostic doctrines did not gain ground in the first century among any persons, who were looked upon as true members of the church, the very errors and absurdities of that system may furnish a confirmation of the orthodox belief. The earliest Gnostics, as we have seen, who were called Docetæ, believed the body of Jesus to have been a phantom: it was either a mere optical illusion, or, like the apparition of an angel, it was something ethereal and impalpable, which had no connection or affinity with matter. The Docetæ must have taken their notion of Jesus from the preaching of the apostles: and this strange perversion of the truth can only be explained by our supposing the apostles to have spoken of Jesus, as a being more than human. So also when other Gnostics, such as the Cerinthians and Ebionites, less wild perhaps though not less erroneous in their Creed, maintained that Jesus and Christ were two separate beings; that Jesus was born of human parents, but that Christ, an emanation from God, descended upon Jesus, and was united to him, at his baptism, who is there that does not recognise in this distorted fable the evangelical narrative of the baptism of Jesus, and the great truths, which the church has always received, of the preexistent divinity and the miraculous conception of Jesus Christ? One division of the Ebionites is expressly said to have believed in the miraculous conception^f: and this mys-

^f Origen. *cont. Cels.* V. 61. p. 733. Eus. *H. E.* III. 27. p. 624, 625. *ib.* 65. p. 628. In 121. Theodoret. *Hær. Fab.* II. Mat. tom. XVI. 12. vol. III. 1. p. 218, 219.

terious doctrine perhaps never received a stronger confirmation, than from the fact of its forming a point of disagreement among persons, who were really the greatest enemies to the Christian name. We cannot account for these notions of the Cerinthians and Ebionites by any other supposition, than its being a matter of public notoriety, that the Christians spoke of their Master as a being, who came down from heaven, and assumed the human nature. The Gnostics would not have used the name of Christ at all, if they had not already found it widely spread : and though their system was embraced with all its errors by persons, who had not yet heard the truth, we have no difficulty of recognising, under the mask of fiction and extravagance, the real doctrines which they perverted, and which have been delivered for ever to the church in the works of the apostles and evangelists.

THE END.

INDEX.

ABGARUS, letter of, 327.
Abilius, 358.
Acts of Pilate, 32. 35.
 — the **Apostles**, 274.
Æons, 77, 374.
Agabus, 138. 240.
Agrippa, see **Herod**.
 — king, 153. 193. 246.
 252. 258. 259. 280. 287. 290.
Agrippina, 258. 265.
Albinus, 287. 290. 303.
Alexander, 59.
Alexandria, 75. 132. 293. 299.
 302. 358.
Ananias of Damascus, 88, 116.
 — the high priest, 245.
 250. 251. 259.
Ananus, or Annas, 58. 287. 290.
Andrew, 328.
Anencretus, *322.
Angels, 77.
Annianus, 292. 302. 358.
Antichrists, 363.
Antioch, 121. 125. 133. 136.
 150. 159. 194. 357.
Antipater, 5.
Apocalypse, 370. 373.
Apocryphal Gospels, 255, 383.
Apollonius of Tyana, 127. 207.
 319.
Apollos, 198. 210.
Apostles, time of their leaving
 Judæa, 146.
Apostles' Creed, 337.
Appia, 272.
Aquila, 185. 191. 202. 228. 230.
 232.
Arabia, 89. 115.
Archelaus, 9. 10.

Archippus, 272.
Areopagus, 181.
Areas, 86. 116. 125.
Aristarchus, 179. 227. 235. 246.
 253. 260. 269.
Aristobulus, 4.
Ascetics, 301.
Asia Minor, 204. 360.
Asiarchs, 205.
Atheism, **Christians** accused of,
 309.
Athens, 178, 180.
Babylon, 297, 318.
Baptism, 16. 50. 203. 215.
Barnabas, 44. 55. 120. 133. 138.
 147. 152. 161. 163.
 — **Epistle of**, 164. 342.
Barsabas, 43.
Bartholomew, 330.
Berenice, 260.
Berœa, 177.
Bishoprics, 359.
Bishops, 102. 150. 182. 211.
Blood, eating of, 156.
Britain, conversion of, 284.
Britannicus, 265.
Brothers of our Lord, 42. 104.
 106. 107.
Burrus, 261. 267.
Byzantium, 328.
Cæsarea, 3. 7. 13. 85. 112. 239.
 253.
Caiaphas, 58. 128.
Caius, 190.
Caligula, 131. 132.
Calumnies against the Chris-
 tians, 309.
Canon of Scripture, 382.
Carpocrates, 353.
Cerdo, 358.
 c c 2

- Cerinthus, 353. 363. 373. 374.
 376.
 Chalcis, 139. 193. 246.
 Christ worshipped, 45.
 Christian, name of, 136.
 Christians confounded with the
 Jews, 366.
 Cilicia, 135. 147. 158. 165.
 Circumcision, 155.
 Claudia, 286.
 Claudius, emperor, 139. 141.
 183. 258.
 Claudius Lysias, 249.
 Clemens, Flavius, 367. 377.
 Clement, Bishop of Rome, 185.
 322. 342.
 ——— his Epistle, 342. 344.
 381.
 Collections for the poor, 138.
 219. 237.
 Colossæ, church of, 168. 197. 270.
 Community of goods, 54.
 Conversion of Saul, 61.
 Corinth, 177. 183. 186. 190.
 201. 210. 213. 216. 225. 229.
 234. 344.
 Cornelius, 110. 114. 130. 182.
 253.
 Council at Jerusalem, 154.
 Creed, Apostles', 337.
 Crescens, 281. 316. 317.
 Crete, 177. 210. 225. 316.
 Crispus, 189.
 Crucifixion, date of, 1.
 Cumanus, 194. 243.
 Cuspius Fadus, 153.
 Cyprus, 121. 125. 147. 163.
 Dalmatia, 316.
 Damascus, 86. 115.
 David, descendants of, 340. 368.
 Deaconesses, 212.
 Deacons, 61. 63. 96. 143.
 Demas, 316.
 Dionysius the Areopagite, 181.
 283.
 Docetæ, 376. 384.
 Domitian, 343. 365. 370.
 Domitilla, 367.
 Dositheus, 79.
 Drusilla, 252.
 Easter, 235.
 Ebionites, 347. 351. 353. 373.
 Edessa, 327.
 Egypt, gospel introduced into,
 299.
 ——— Jews in, 51.
 Egyptian impostor, 244. 249.
 Elders, 97. 102. 143. 149. 211.
 Eleazer, 244.
 Emanations, 77.
 Epaphras, 269. 270.
 Epaphroditus, 273.
 Ephesus, 177. 191. 197. 202.
 204. 219. 227. 238. 249. 270.
 360. 372. 378.
 Epistle of James, 289.
 ——— John, 362. 376.
 ——— Jude, 334.
 ——— Paul, to Colossians,
 271.
 ——— Corinthians,
 first, 216. 227.
 ——— Corinthians,
 second, 227.
 ——— Ephesians,
 271.
 ——— Galatians,
 216.
 ——— Hebrews,
 279.
 ——— Philemon,
 271.
 ——— Philippians,
 2 73.
 ——— Romans,
 229. 231. 234. 289.
 ——— Thessalo-
 nians, first, 188.
 ——— Thessalo-
 nians, second, 190.
 ——— Timothy,
 first, 226.
 ——— Timothy,
 second, 315.
 ——— Titus, 212.
 Epistles of Peter, 298. 318. 334.
 Erastus, 314.
 Essenes, 21. 300.

- Ethiopia, 83.
 Eubulus, 314.
 Eunuch, Ethiopian, 82.
 Evarestus, 346. 356.
 Evodius, 196. 357.
 Exorcists, 207.
 False Christs, 19. 244.
 Famine in Judæa, 138. 142.
 158. 191.
 Felix, 194. 243. 245. 251. 252.
 259. 264.
 Festus, 252. 259. 263. 280. 287.
 Florus, Gessius, 303.
 France, gospel introduced into,
 281. 317.
 Galatia, 167. 216. 231. 316. 317.
 Galilæan, 137.
 Galilee, 9. 93. 131. 258.
 Gallio, 187. 190. 268.
 Gallus, Cestius, 305.
 Gamaliel, 56. 59. 67. 69.
 Gaul, gospel introduced into,
 281. 317.
 Gentile converts, 110. 114. 118.
 126. 148. 150. 154.
 Gift of tongues, 46. 54.
 Gifts, miraculous, 81. 98. 204.
 240.
 Gnosticism, 75. 176. 206. 211.
 213. 214. 223. 226. 233. 238.
 271. 289. 310. 311. 313. 334.
 351. 362. 373. 378.
 Gnostics confounded with Chris-
 tians, 310.
 Gospel, progress of the, 52. 73.
 335.
 Gospels, order of the, 254.
 Grecians, 63.
 Helena, 142.
 Helius, 315.
 Heresy, 137. 379.
 Hermas, 342.
 Herod Agrippa, 131. 132. 138.
 141.
 — Antipas, 9. 87. 125.
 131. 369.
 — king of Chalcis, 139.
 153. 193.
 — Philip, 9. 131.
 Herod the Great, 5.
 Herodias, 131.
 Hierapolis, 168. 197. 331.
 High priests, appointment of
 the, 10. 129. 139. 153. 193.
 245. 259.
 Hyrcanus, 4.
 Ignatius, 197. 357. 380.
 Illyria, 229.
 India, 325. 330.
 Inspiration, 241. 256.
 Intolerance of the Romans, 171.
 Ishmael, 246. 259.
 Izates, 142.
 James, bishop of Jerusalem, 100.
 120. 123. 143. 155. 246. 287.
 — son of Alphæus, 105. 333.
 — Zebedee, 140.
 Jason, 179.
 Jerusalem, church of, 103. 191.
 243. 280. 287.
 — siege and taking of,
 by Titus, 305. 346.
 — taken by Herod, 5.
 — Pompey, 4.
 Jesus, popularity of, 14. 27. 57.
 — son of Damnaeus, 290.
 Jewish war, 12. 19. 289. 303.
 Jews in Alexandria, 76. 132.
 375.
 — Antioch, 126. 357.
 — Rome, 9. 12. 35. 51.
 172. 183. 230. 262.
 — numbers of, every where,
 51.
 John, surnamed Mark, 144. 148.
 162. 275. 292.
 — the Baptist, 13. 87. 198.
 203.
 — Evangelist, 153. 361.
 — Gospel of,
 373
 Jonathan, 129. 130. 245.
 Joseph of Arimathea, 286.
 Josephus, 199.
 Judas of Galilee, 11. 14. 153.
 Jude the Apostle, 106. 333.
 368.
 Justin Martyr, 232.

- Laodicea, 168. 197. 270. 360.
 Lazarus, 147. 282.
 Linus, 277. 314. 321.
 Logos, 373. 375.
 Lord's day, 237.
 Luke, 42. 53. 92. 111. 169. 173.
 179. 188. 213. 227. 236. 237.
 246. 253. 260. 274. 281. 314.
 317.
 — Gospel of, 253. 257. 297.
 Macedonia, 170. 179. 188. 213.
 226. 236.
 Magic, 78. 207. 309.
 Malta, 260.
 Mamertine prisons, 317. 319.
 Manes or Manichæus, 78.
 Mark, see John.
 — the Evangelist, 292. 299.
 302.
 — Gospel of, 296.
 Marriage, 214.
 Marsus, 136. 139.
 Mary Magdalen, 282.
 — the Virgin, 104. 361.
 Matthew, 329.
 — Gospel of, 304. 330.
 Matthias, 43. 333.
 Menander, 352.
 Milan, church of, 163. 312.
 Miracles, 17. 20. 53. 80. 168.
 Miraculous gifts, 81. 98. 204.
 240. 358.
 Monachism, 301.
 Narbonne, 282.
 Narcissus, 266.
 Nazarene, 136. 348.
 Nazarenes, 347. 354.
 Nerva, 371. 377.
 Nero, 252. 258. 265. 268. 307.
 315. 321.
 New Testament, books of the,
 381.
 Nicolaitans, 364. 369. 372.
 Nicolas the deacon, 65. 364.
 Nicopolis, 212.
 Onesimus, 271.
 Onesiphorus, 317.
 Pallas, 243. 252.
 Papias, 331.
 Parishes, 359.
 Paul a prisoner at Cæsarea, 253.
 — Rome, 261.
 306. 313.
 — a tent maker, 174.
 — conversion of, 61. 88.
 — journey of, first, 147.
 — second, 162.
 — third, 197.
 — to Spain, 278.
 280.
 — martyrdom of, 320.
 Pella, 305. 341. 346. 353.
 Pentecost, day of, 45.
 Persecution by Domitian, 365.
 371.
 — Nero, 307. 312.
 321.
 — Saul, 72. 91.
 — causes of, 307.
 365.
 Pergamos, 369.
 Peter, 48. 94. 109. 117. 141.
 153. 155. 294.
 — at Antioch, 119. 127.
 143. 160. 195.
 — Rome, 143. 229. 275.
 294. 317.
 — martyrdom of, 320.
 Petronius, 132. 136.
 Pharisees, 29. 58. 251.
 Philemon, 271. 272.
 Philip, Herod, 9. 131.
 — the apostle, 283. 285.
 331.
 — deacon, 74. 85. 113.
 239. 253. 332.
 Philippi, 170. 174. 235. 254.
 273.
 Philo Judæus, 153. 296.
 Phœnicia, 124.
 Phrygia, 168. 197.
 Platonists, 76.
 Pleroma, 78.
 Polycarp, 360. 372. 380.
 Pompey, 4. 86.
 Pomponia Græcina, 266.
 Pontius Pilate, 13. 31. 57. 128.
 Poppæa Sabina, 267.

- Presbyters, 97. 102.
 President of Syria, 125. 128.
 131.
 Proculus, 315.
 Procurator of Judæa, 3. 10. 12.
 125. 153.
 Prophet, 164.
 Proselytes, 111.
 Publius, 261.
 Pudens, 314.
 Puteoli, 261.
 Quadratus, 194. 243. 245. 252.
 Quirinius, 11.
 Resurrection, 30. 36. 58. 63.
 214.
 Rome, burning of, 306.
 — church at, 229. 276.
 294. 322. 339.
 Rufus, 51. 230.
 Sadducees, 30. 58. 63. 130.
 251.
 Samaria, 6. 9. 39. 74. 84. 94.
 Samuel, 68.
 Sanhedrim, 29. 36. 56. 62.
 Saul, called Paul, 149.
 — early history of, 68.
 — in Antioch, 138. 144. 150.
 194.
 — Arabia, 89. 115. 117.
 — Damascus, 89. 115.
 Sejanus, 2. 12. 36.
 Seneca, 187. 267.
 Sergius Paulus, 147.
 Seventy disciples, 40. 42.
 Sicarii, 19. 244.
 Silas, 158. 164. 171. 174. 177.
 178. 188. 191. 197. 298.
 Simon Magus, 75. 78. 176. 185.
 206. 231. 270. 289. 294.
 312. 318. 352. 364. 383.
 — of Cyrene, 51. 230.
 — the Cananite, 333.
 Smyrna, 372.
 Sosthenes, 189.
 Spain, gospel introduced into,
 140. 148. 278. 280. 312.
 Stephanas, 188.
 Stephen, 66.
 Sunday, 237.
 Symeon, 59.
 — bishop of Jerusalem,
 290. 341. 357.
 Synagogues, 66.
 Syria, 135.
 — presidents of, 3. 125. 128.
 131.
 Syriac Version, 328.
 Tabernacles, feast of, 62. 66.
 Tacitus, 307. 311.
 Tarsus, 68. 123. 134.
 Temple, 40. 47. 249.
 Thaddæus, 327.
 Thebuthis, 291.
 Thecla, 148.
 Theophilus, 256.
 — high priest, 130.
 Therapeutæ, 22. 300.
 Thessalonica, 174.
 Theudas, 14. 153.
 Thomas, 325.
 Tiberius, 1. 12. 32.
 — Alexander, 153. 193.
 Timothy, 165. 173. 179. 188.
 191. 197. 216. 222. 227.
 235. 238. 247. 270. 279.
 314. 315. 360.
 Titus, 152. 154. 166. 210. 225.
 227. 314. 316.
 — emperor, 339.
 Torpetes, 266.
 Tower of Antonia, 249.
 Trachonitis, 6. 258.
 Trajan, 376.
 Tribute, Jewish, 4. 10. 11. 14.
 Troas, 169. 225. 236. 237.
 Trophimus, 247. 249. 253. 282.
 314.
 Tychicus, 270. 271. 314.
 Tyre, 239.
 Valerius Gratus, 13.
 Varus, 10.
 Vespasian, 339. 340.
 Vitellius, 125. 128. 130. 132.
 Vow, 248.
 Zacchæus, 44. 182. 185.
 Zealots, 11.

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